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Slava Bohu

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THE STORY OF
THE DUKHOBORS

BY
J. F. C. WRIGHT

FARRAR & RINEHART, INC.
NEW YORK TORONTO



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AUTHOR'S NOTE

"Slava Bohu" means "Praise God," or, more literally, "Praised be God." It has long been used by Dukhobors in greeting one another, on saying good-bye, for a good crop, or at the cow's death, especially if she happened to be old and going dry.

I became interested in the Dukhobors in 1932. I was intrigued by the paradox of frugal, hard-working farmers worshipping a turbulent leader whose personal life was, in most ways, diametrically opposed to Dukhobor beliefs and practices. In that year, when I was organizing for the Saskatchewan Farmer-Labour Party, I talked with them at their work and in their homes and read the few available English-language books about them. In the fall of 1935, on finishing some work for the Saskatchewan "Wheat Pool," I went to Blaine Lake district where through the winter I lived with Dukhobors settled along the North Saskatchewan River. I spent the spring of 1936 in the Yorkton-Swan River area where there is a large Dukhobor settlement. In May, out of funds, I took a newspaper job on the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, and during the next twelve months sorted my notes and saved a few dollars. In the spring of 1937 I returned to Yorkton, and that summer went to the settlements in British Columbia. Throughout the winter of 1937-38 I co-ordinated my notes with material gleaned from Russian church and state reports, from the diaries of Quakers and other idealists who had visited the Dukhobors in Russia and Canada, from various books and pamphlets in English and Russian, and from Canadian Government files. As my manuscript progressed I gave almost all the living men and women in the story the opportunity to affirm or deny words and actions attributed to themselves. I have not anywhere deviated from the facts as I was able to ascertain them, nor have I fictionized any episode or incident in the book from Chapter Two to the end. Chapter One is the exception. I was unable to find out exactly how and when the Dukhobors originated nearly 300 years ago, so Chapter One is a composite tale of the sect's "beginning" based upon folklore, legend, and historical fragments.

I have had, of course, difficulty in spelling Russian names in the English language. I have used "Dukhobor" in preference to

"Doukhobor," "Dookhobor," or "Doakhobor." "Du" is consistent with the spelling and pronunciation of several other words in the history, such as Dunia, Lukeria, ruble, muzhik. "Du" is pronounced like "do" in "do not." Moreover, "Dukhobor" was endorsed by Sir Bernard Pares, Professor of Russian Language and History, University of London, England, and president of the Anglo-Slavic Relations Committee.

In spelling names of Dukhobors themselves, such of Popoff, Mahartoff, Makaroff, and so forth, I have used "off" instead of "ov." "Off" was the ending the Canadian immigration authorities wrote down in recording the names of the Dukhobor immigrants, and the Dukhobors mainly sign their names in this way. A few have since changed the spelling of their names; for instance, several sons of Nikito Popoff use Papove. Of the numerous Kazakoff family, one, Michael Kazakoff, decided to spell his name Cazakoff. In cases such as these I have adhered to the choice of the individuals concerned. In translating names of Russians who are not of the Dukhobor sect, I have used the ending "ov," such as Hilkov, Tchertkov, and so on, except where the owners were living and using "off." I have written "Tolstoy" instead of "Tolstoi" because Tolstoy is the way the great writer asked that his name be spelt in English. Tolstoy's last letter but one before he died was written to Aylmer Maude whom he appointed his biographer and translator in the English language. In a letter to me, Maude asked that the name of Tolstoy be spelt with a "y" and not with an "i," and he pointed out that the spelling "Tolstoi" had crept into English because translators had looked to French translations for their source, instead of to the original Russian. I have shortened Soulerzhitski to Sulerjitski. He is the Sulerzhitski, or Sulerzhizky, about whom Maxim Gorky wrote so fascinatingly in his "Reminiscences of Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Andreev."

"Caucasia" is selected for this history instead of "Caucasus" or "Trans-Caucasia." The Russians call this area Kavkaz, and spell it that way too, "a" as in "balmy." Other choices and innovations of spelling Russian words result from the struggle to transliterate.

In writing this book I have been aided by students of the Dukhobors, and I gratefully acknowledge the help of Aylmer Maude, Leo Sulerjitski, and Vladimir Bonch-Bruivich. Maude's research, partly set forth in his *A PECULIAR PEOPLE, THE DOUKHOBORS* was most valuable in compiling Chapter Two of *SLAVA BOHU*. Without Sulerjitski's brilliant diary, *WITH*

THE DUKHOBORS IN AMERICA, of which I made free use in chapters eleven, twelve, and fourteen, I could not have portrayed the human side of the voyage of the *S.S. Lake Huron* and the first years of settlement in Canada. Bonch-Bruivich's analysis of the early communes in the North West Territories, his published collection of Peter Vasilivich Verigin's letters, and his research into remote Dukhobor history were greatly helpful.

I also wish to acknowledge with deep gratitude the help given me by Professor Arthur S. Morton, Head of the History Department, University of Saskatchewan, and authority on the history of Western Canada; Charles Clay, Literary Editor, *Winnipeg Free Press*; Senator Cairine Wilson, Canadian Senate; H. O. McCurry, Director, National Gallery of Canada; W. R. Clarke, Editorial Writer, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*; Dora Dibney, Telegraph Editor, *Regina Leader-Post*; Ethel Saper, Yorkton; Ernst Lindner, Saskatoon; F. F. Payne, Publisher, *Nelson Daily News*; Victor Cruse, Saskatoon; Jessie McEwen, Editor, Thomas Nelson & Sons, Toronto; J. W. Dafoe, Editor, *Winnipeg Free Press*; J. Murray Gibbon, General Publicity Agent, Canadian Pacific Railway; Jack McBride, Bethany; General S. T. Wood, Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Ernst Davis, Saskatoon Public Library; M. J. Coldwell, M.P.; Victor Sifton, Publisher; Dr. O. D. Skelton, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs; Evelyn Rosenthal, Ottawa; Henry Werblow, Bennington, Vermont; Frank Eliason, Secretary, United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section.

Dukhobors who gave me most valuable co-operation speak for themselves in this history. Without the help of these men and women, who worked with me that all might have an objective account of their background, this book could not have been written.

J.F.C.W.

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Slava Bohu

To

the rising generation of Dukhobors
and friends whose moral and material
help made this work possible.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENESIS: 1665

IN THE MYSTERIOUS GLOAMING which follows sunset and heralds the approach of night in Central Russia, a lone row-boat approached a serf village. Short, furtive squeaks, and faint splashes of disturbed water broke the silence of the winding river. Lifting his oars from the shadowy water, Peter, the peasant philosopher, turned again to scan the bank where the cattle came down to drink, and where the night fishermen took to their boats. No one was there. While yet a few hundred yards from the landing, he guided the boat into a small breakwater of driftwood, tied it, and climbed cautiously through the overhanging willows.

He ascended the bank and there in a clump of poplars, stood still to listen. Peter was grateful for the singing from the mud and wicker walls of the village, it would make his approach less conspicuous. Also, one of those strong young voices might be his wife's; for despite the stiff pain in the day-old welts on his broad back, he could not forget it was more than three months since he had seen her.

Evening dampness accentuated the smells of the pasture as he walked toward the village gate. The barking of a watchdog did not trouble him, he knew all the dogs and they would not have forgotten him. But there was at least one night watchman to be avoided and several serfs who might report his homecoming to the big house, the lights of which glimmered on the hill beyond the village.

Entering the gate he turned along a lane, unnoticed. The last of the women milkers were picking their way through the cattle yard. By the hut of his father-in-law, young men and women stood talking and laughing in enjoyment of that hour which followed the evening meal. He walked past them, as if he too had been in the fields all day.

There was light in the window. He tried the door but it was bolted, so he knocked.

"Who is there?"

He recognized Vasili's voice.

"Open. It is I, Peter," he said.

"Peter!" said Nastasia, the daughter. "It is Peter, my husband. Let him in, Nikifor."

Nikifor, the youngest lad, opened the door, fastening the bolt again as soon as Peter was inside.

Peter, known among the villagers for a self-assurance not common to the serf of Muscovy in the year 1655, removed his hard-peaked cap and greeted the excited members of the family with the triple kiss; first on the left cheek, then on the right, and lastly full on the mouth. Nastasia he kissed last; his nearness sending the blood to her sun-browned face.

"*Sadis*, sit down, Peter, you must be very hungry." She went to the oven for the copper bowl in which was soup left from the evening meal. Their two small children stirred in their beds by the stove, as if they dreamt of the faraway place.

"They, from the big house, asked us where you had gone." Andrew the herdsman stroked his graying mustache. "We told them we didn't know, which was true."

Nikifor, a slim lad for a peasant, sat at the end of the table, his head cupped in his hands, eager to hear of Peter's travels.

Vasili, with bucolic but calculating blue eyes, had a separate room where he and his family slept. He had been about to join them when Peter came, but now his curiosity made him stay.

The main room, in which lived four generations, was meagerly lighted by pine slivers held in a crack of the great clay oven which protruded into Vasili's room. On each side of the long table, bleached white with much scrubbing, were wooden benches. There were several stools, sleeping platforms with feather ticks and sheepskins, a spinning wheel, a faggot broom. There were no cupboards, no cups, no plates.

"Tell us where you have been and what you have done, Peter," asked Andrew.

Peter, his wooden spoon halfway from the great bowl to his mouth, paused as if to answer.

"Why do you not take off your coat, it is warm in here," said Nastasia. With evident stiffness, he removed his sheepskin.

Nastasia was first to cry out: "Look at his shirt. It is all torn. It is blood!"

"*Da*, it is dry blood!" Grandfather peered closer.

Nastasia helped him pull the remains of his shirt over his head.

"See those welts!"

"The whip must have cut him to the bone!" Nastasia gasped. "Poor Peter, why do they treat us so?"

"What happened?" Andrew asked in a tense voice.

Peter turned to face them.

"You know why I went away. I wanted to find freedom for all of us," he said. "At first I found everything the same; unless you have government papers to show that you are free, you cannot work openly, and soldiers always are asking questions. I lived; for kind people are everywhere. As I went farther toward the southwest looking for freedom, things became easier because there were fewer soldiers and landlords."

"But tell us how you got whipped," said Nastasia.

"That happened on my way back, not far from home. In a town where I stopped, a family gave me bread and onions, but told me I should not stay. They said the new governor had arrived, a bad and hard man. I took my bread, and, seeing an old church, with big trees around it, I went into the yard to eat and rest. While I was there two priests came out of the church. They stood on the steps, disputing. I could hear them but they couldn't see me. One said the sign of the cross should be made with only two fingers; the other, that three fingers should be used.

"'But,' said the first priest, 'as far back as I can remember, we used only two fingers.'

"'Da, yes,' said the second, 'but God in His wisdom has revealed to Archbishop Nikon, that we have been wrong, and now, the right way is with three fingers, and I believe him.'

"Each priest argued that the Holy Spirit was in favor of his own way of making the sign of the cross," Peter continued. "I rose from behind the trees where I had been sitting. 'You are both wrong,' I told them. 'The Holy Spirit is not concerned whether you make the sign of the cross with two fingers, three fingers, or with all fingers on both hands. And if you priests had enough of the Holy Spirit within, you would not be squabbling over such foolish things.' At first they looked startled, then one grew very red in his face, and both became angry, saying that I would have to pay for my insulting and blasphemous words. I told them if they wanted to use their fingers as the Holy Spirit would desire, they would dig in the garden for their food like other people."

"I turned my back on them and walked away; one of them shouting after me, 'You'll repent this!'

"I walked away from the town, and, keeping out of sight where possible, went toward the house of some peasants who would welcome me.

"But when I was crossing the government road to the estate where they live, two soldiers on horseback chased me. I ran to some bushes, but they caught me. One hit me across my back with a *knut*, and the other said, 'This is the *mushik* we want.' Then they drove me back to town, making me run so fast that when I came to the governor's place, I was breathing like a tired ox. The two priests came and told the governor I had blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

"'Oh,' said the governor, baring his teeth at me like an angry dog, 'You are wrestling with the Holy Spirit, eh? You are a spirit wrestler, a dukhobor? Tie him to the post, and whip him across his back.'

"The soldiers stretched my arms above my head with a thong so that my feet just touched the ground. The whip whined through the air and I was sick even before it cut my back. But with the third whack I mastered myself and kept from crying aloud.

"'Postoi! Wait!' I heard one of the priests say. 'Possibly he will repent now. Do you see the error of your ways?' he asked, coming close to me. 'Are you sorry you blasphemed the Holy Spirit?'

"'Have you learned how many fingers you should use to make the sign of the cross?' I asked. 'Possibly that is your business, but my belief is that the Holy Spirit tells me I have nothing to repent.' I couldn't say more because my throat was dry and my lips were trembling.

"'Teach him a lesson,' shouted the governor, and down came the whip so many times I lost count. When they stopped beating and untied me, I could hardly stand and went away staggering. I stayed in some bushes by the river, for they might have followed me to my friends and persecuted them.

"When darkness came, I started for home, following the river. Later, I took a boat; God will forgive, my need was great."

"I am afraid much trouble is coming," said Vasili resignedly.

There was silence for a moment. Grandfather sat with his head in his hands, looking down at the table, slowly running his gnarled old fingers through his white hair. Vasili played a game with his fingers, first extending two fingers in the manner of the Old Believers, then three after the fashion of Archbishop Nikon's ruling.

"*Tak*, cheer up. We're not all dead yet," laughed Peter, pulling on a clean shirt.

Nikifor's young face was flushed and his eyes shone with admiration: "So they called you 'Spirit Wrestler, Dukhobor?' They

can call me a Dukhobor, too. I will follow you anywhere . . . to any faraway place where we can live our lives." His words were suddenly hushed. "Quiet! Someone is coming!"

"Those footsteps—he walks like the overseer from the big house," whispered the woman.

Nikifor, who had been by the door to listen, resumed his place at the table.

Peter began to recite a prayer of the Orthodox. All bowed their heads reverently. The footsteps paused by the door, then moved away.

"Enough of that prayer." Peter refilled his spoon with soup. "Slava Bohu. Praise God. The Christ within us truly tells us we cannot serve God while our hands are tied in bondage to the landlord. From seedtime until harvest and through the winter we toil, yet we have nothing that is ours. Each week we worship idols in the village church. The authority of tsars and archbishops, landlords and priests, we must reject forever. Then each of us will listen only to his own reason and his conscience, and all will live peacefully together as brothers and sisters."

It was not the first time these humble folk gathered around the same rough table had heard similar pronouncements, but the proclamation of Peter was most impressive. There was conviction in his resonant voice. As they gazed at him, his people drew strength. Had he not confounded the priests and by his courage scoffed at the soldiers' whips? Had he not, with his back alone, lifted a loaded wagon from a rut in the road? Yet he laughed with the children and they called him uncle. Such a man deserved to be listened to.

For three months he had been away, had traveled far; despite his wounds, he had brought back a stirring of life, like wind blowing through a field of grain.

"The time has come when each must heed the voice within and fulfill the will of God," Peter continued. "Each day, each week, each year we stay in the rut, it will be harder to climb out. And we shall be slaves forever to landlords, priests and captains."

Everyone listened expectantly. Nikifor, dreamer, lover of song and nature, saw in the inspiration of Peter a way to leave behind the drab existence of serfdom. Vasili weighed the speaker's words through half-closed eyes. Grandfather shuddered involuntarily at the thought that someone might betray this dangerous talk to the master, and said, "Nikifor, go outside to make sure no one is listening."

Nikifor saw nothing but the glow in the north where sunset blends with the dawn of early summer. He walked to the back of the hut to make sure no one was lurking. From the village gate came the sound of the night watchman's wooden clapper. Mist was rising from the river, and a cow coughed in the cattle yard.

"Many miles from here," Peter said, "near a river men call the Dniepr, there is land good enough to grow all we need, and no masters are there. Neither are there priests, nor tsar's officials. It is a country of black soil, good water, tall grasses and green trees, far away from Moscow."

"But possibly robbers are there?" objected the fat Vasili. "An uncle of mine, in the time of Tsar Mikhael, went away to a far-off place to find land. He never returned, and it is said he was killed by robbers."

"No! Robbers are not there," Peter replied. "There are a few Cossacks of the kind who neither obey tsars, nor steal from honest peasants. The time has come, God tells us that we ourselves must go there to live in the spirit of Christ."

"*Pravda*, I will go!" declared Nikifor.

"It would be very good to live like brothers and sisters in Christ," Nastasia offered. "But it is very far. It is dangerous. And how would we take our children?"

"I, too, would like land of my own and to live as God wills, but how is it possible to go when we could not get papers, and when we might be arrested for running away?" queried Vasili.

"As for eating on the way, let that not worry you," Peter replied. "How did I eat when I was away? Did I grow the food I ate? No. And who among us knows of an honest man or woman who has come to us and who has been turned away hungry? It is the same elsewhere. In every village there are men and women who will feed us, give us a place to sleep and keep us secret. Surely, they too have to go to church and bow before ikons. They, too, pull their caps from their heads when the priest speaks to them, and they must kiss the master's hand on holidays; yet many believe all men are equal, and that we should bow to no one except the God within."

"But how can we take with us oxen or carts, or much seed? We would have no papers and be arrested." Vasili turned his thick palms upward in despairing gesture.

"We can take a little seed and what gold we have," said Peter, fixing his eyes on the fat one. "You look like a man who has collected a few coins."

"My little is very little."

"But think what we could do in the new life," said Nikifor.

"When harvest comes, we might earn along the way?" ventured Andrew.

"I feel I am too old to go," sighed the white-bearded one. "I would be a burden. Yet I would feel very sad if I had to stay."

"*Dedushka, Dedushka,*" Peter stroked Grandfather's head. "It is men like you we need. How will we manage without your wisdom and counsel?"

The old one's eyes brightened, his wizened face opening in a smile.

Peter, the peasant philosopher, was one of a number who sought God and land and spiritual and economic freedom. He—like men of all times—and those who listened to him now, struggled for happiness. His idea of the millennium had as its basis the idea that men and women should recognize no authority other than their own reason and intuition, "the inner voice." By obeying the "voice of the God within," he believed men and women could live with one another in harmony. "All men are equal in the sight of God, and rulers are unnecessary," he proclaimed.

An important fact was hidden from Peter, however. Little did he and others, who thus addressed the peasants, realize that they themselves were potential rulers in the face of their insistence against rulership. Peter's hearers, swayed by their desires and his personality, memorized his words of "freedom, no church, no government." Yet time was to prove them ready to accept religious domination and economic direction; but it was to be more to their liking than that of the Orthodox priest and landlord.

And so it was that potential Dukhobors turned to men like Peter, not because they were prepared singly to think their way through superstition, fear and dogma, to independence, but simply because they felt that Peter, and men of his kind, were stronger than themselves, yet of themselves. From him they sought the protection church and state had failed to give.

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CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

IT WAS IN 1654 that Archbishop Nikon—the ambitious prelate who had risen from a peasant hut to the highest position in the Russian Orthodox Church—introduced his “reformed” prayer book. That book provoked religious controversy which resulted in the Great Schism. And out of it came the Dukhobors, with many other sects.

Of reform in the progressive sense, Archbishop Nikon had neither idea nor intention. From visiting Greek clergy, he had been pleased to learn of precedent which would allow him to make alterations in Russian ritualism. His “reforms” consisted entirely of revision of religious formalism.

The new prayer book, for instance, required that three fingers be used to make the sign of the cross, instead of two as had been the custom, and that one hallelujah should be used instead of two. These and similar revisions were necessary, Nikon contended, because of errors which had crept into church usage. The shape the cross should have, and how the name of Jesus should be spelled, were other contentious matters which precipitated the initial controversy. At first the people, unaware of clerical squabble, had no part in it; but, later, many took advantage of it to openly disassociate themselves from the church. It is scarcely conceivable that all priests were so superficial as to waste themselves in such futile argument. It is more likely the issue with them was deeper. Those priests who desired some liberalism, or who saw opportunity for satisfying ambitions, were provided with a nominal excuse.

When the simmering dissent among the peasants finally boiled over, the main body of dissenters, the “Old Believers”—who insisted on using two fingers to cross themselves, instead of three—became known as Raskolniki. Other dissidents saw safety in numbers and joined the Raskolniki until such time as they could feel sufficiently independent to proclaim their unorthodox views. Among these were Dukhobors who secretly held a negative attitude toward all priests and formalisms. As the split grew and the dissenters increased, Archbishop Nikon, with the support of the Tsar, pressed harder for the adoption of his prayer book, and

threatened the rebellious with dire consequences should they persist in their "error." The Council of the Church, in 1666-67, anathematized the dissenters: "Their souls in virtue of the power given to the Church by Jesus Christ, to be given up to eternal torments, together with the soul of the traitor Judas." This sweeping judgment gave the Raskolniki an opportunity for sarcastic rebuttal, so dearly appreciated by the Russian sectarian. Professing "sorrow for all the patriarchs and tsars who once believed as we do, and all the people of former generations who once believed as we do, and who crossed themselves then just as we do now," the Raskolniki pointed out, "now you have cursed us, you have also anathematized all your forefathers and all the holy men of the past."

The logic of this rejoinder was not calculated to placate the archbishop, and persecution of the dissenters increased.

It was early in the reign of Peter the Great, under the regency of Tsaritsa Sophia, that state and church combined for a relentless drive against sectarians whose numbers had grown to millions. Attention of the authorities was centered on the Raskolniki, numerically the largest sect and closest to the Orthodox—and therefore the most dangerous from the standpoint of proselytism—but all religious recalcitrants were to be "discouraged." Raskolniki were flogged, imprisoned, tortured, or put to death by burning, unless they would deny their faith. This bloody policy served to bring out the stubborn resistance of the Russian sectarian. Raskolniki, in the act of being burned at the stake, strove to show two fingers in the sign of their cross as a last testimony. This symbol caused men and women to turn from the Orthodox more readily than preaching would have done.

"Baptism by fire" followed in the wake of official burnings, whenever dissenters saw that escape was hopeless. On such occasions they gathered in wooden buildings and set fire to them. These collective suicides were viewed by the participants as an ordinance of Christ, a flaming vehicle which carried their souls straight to heaven. Far into the reign of Peter the Great, the dissenters were hunted mercilessly by armed men dispatched to discover and destroy them; "every man, woman and child to be apprehended in order that their abominable heresy may be exterminated without chance of revival."

Hunting sectarians to death was not the sole activity of state and church, nor was the entire population of Russia engaged in hunting or being hunted. Space does not permit reference to less

spectacular events, yet a picture of the persecution and resistance it engendered is necessary to get a glimpse of the harassed background from which the Dukhobors emerged as an economic and religious entity.

There was now no advantage for a dissenter who was not a Raskolnik posing as one when the unfortunate "Old Believers" were selected for extermination. Hence other sectarians disassociated themselves from the main schism and began secretly to test their respective religious faiths. Men and women of Dukhobor belief were scattered in small groups west of the Volga, their leaders hoping a lapse in persecution might allow them to converge in a large settlement removed from government centers.

Soon after Anne of Russia came to the throne in 1730, the tide of state persecution turned away from dissenters to rage against priests of the Russian Orthodox Church. A series of palace intrigues and an influx of non-Russian adventurers into court, put Biron, Anne's favorite and archadventurer, at the head of the bureaucracy. He, who with Munnich and Osterman supported the Lutheran Church, dealt severely with Russian Orthodox priests who opposed him. While he stripped them of their office and had them tortured, there was little encouragement for Orthodox clerics to press the hunt for dissenters.

Among the many sects, which during Anne's reign openly consolidated their beliefs and increased their following, were the Dukhobors. Under these more felicitous conditions, two settlements were formed in a frontier area: one in the province of Tambov, near the village of Horelovka, and another in the province of Ekaterinoslav near the village of Nikolsk. Fact seems to point to slight organization of the Tambov settlement, while that at Ekaterinoslav province was definitely organized.

Sylvan Kolesnikoff, the leader of the Ekaterinoslav colony, has come down in legend as an exceptional man. The absence of his mention in official sources during his lifetime, seems proof of his diplomacy. His simple teachings included total negation of Orthodox forms of worship. He recognized the guidance of the "voice of God within." With his teaching he combined administrative ability, and an aptitude for leadership, which kept his followers out of trouble with the authorities, as well as at peace with the people living in close proximity.

Illarion Pobirohin, leader of the Tambov settlement, was less consistent. It would seem that, combining arrogance with ambi-

tion, he talked himself into prominence in the councils of the Dukhobors there, and secured rulership.

The Dukhobor faith at this time expressed itself in a negative attitude to outside authority. They believed external sacraments were offensive to God, and that priests and ritual acted as a barrier to actual communion between God and man. By removing the Orthodox barriers, the Dukhobors believed men and women could attain harmony with God. This harmony involved freedom from all obligations to church and state.

Strife between the state and such a religious body was inevitable. During the reign of Anne, 1730-40, and the reign of Elizabeth, 1741-62—both being more interested in maintaining their doubtful positions, than in the establishment of a strong state—the Dukhobors, and other dissenters, were rarely molested. This pseudo freedom was not the result of increasing religious tolerance, but an evidence of instability in the state and church.

In the year 1762, Catherine (the Great) seized the throne of Russia. In her case, "Mistress of the Russian Land," had significance, for her subjects found her a mistress capable of introducing order with a heavy hand. As state administration became centralized, the tentacles of control reached out, eventually enveloping the Dukhobors.

Sylvan Kolesnikoff died in 1775, and the less astute Ilarion Pobirohin assumed authority over both colonies. Pobirohin ascribed to himself divine power and established a theocratic communism. The material success or failure of this experiment is not known. Pobirohin's self-proclaimed divinity increased his arrogance, and this, coupled with the growing efficiency of the Russian administration, led to his being exiled to Siberia, his family and intimates accompanying him.

Pobirohin's conflict had sad repercussions. The affairs and mode of life of the colonies were investigated, resulting in the dispersal of the sect by order of the government. Whole families were transported to distant parts of the empire; those liable for military service were conscripted; while some were attached to the land, thus becoming serfs, as their ancestors had been.

With the banishment of Pobirohin, Saveli Kapustin secretly took over the leadership. Hearsay ascribes to him the doubtful honor of being Pobirohin's son. Born in 1743, he served the full term of twenty-five years in the Russian army and came to the Dukhobor leadership in the prime of his life in 1790.

The Dukhobors, exposed to the full glare of state officialdom, continued to be harshly dealt with by local governors. Intimidation, trumped-up charges, prison sentences and floggings at the whim of officials, served to accentuate stubborn resistance innate in the sectarians, who looked forward to the day when they would re-establish themselves as a nation within a nation. In the meantime, they found superstitious and fatalistic solace in Pobirohin's prophecy: "There will come a time when you will suffer as Christian martyrs."

After the assassination of the cruel Paul I, in 1801, his son, Alexander I, became Tsar of all Russia. This cheerful and liberal young emperor—who, it is said, acquiesced in the death of his madman father—introduced a general policy of lenience toward sectarians which is reflected in Dukhobor history. Proclaiming to the governors of provinces the futility of harsh persecution as a remedy for "religious error," Alexander approved of a plan whereby Dukhobors—with the exception of those owned as serfs—were granted permission to go to the Milky Waters area in the province of Tauridia bordering the Black Sea. The province had a climate which was later to make it a riviera. When the Dukhobors settled there, it was a frontier raided by Crimean Tartars.

When Saveli Kapustin moved his followers south to the Milky Waters, Dukhobors from distant parts congregated there under his leadership. And again the aptitude of this people for agriculture and hard work brought prosperity.

Kapustin, unlike Pobirohin, did not let a demonstration of vanity threaten his rule or lead to trouble with the authorities. To all outsiders he posed as an "equal with all other brothers and sisters who sometimes choose me for their spokesman." Through his twelve apostles and thirty elders, he transacted the business of the sect, taking care to pay all government taxes promptly.

"We are all equal," this theocrat told outsiders. "We have no leader, and none among us is greater than the other." This phrase was so impressed upon Dukhobor children that they rarely failed to give the prescribed answer when asked, "Who is your leader?" By means of set answers, Kapustin perfected a system of evasion, which led outsiders to believe that the affairs of the sect were democratically managed. When asked who was responsible for this or that decision, the Dukhobor promptly answered: "No one man among us decided, we all decided together." The ruler discouraged his followers from associating with outsiders. When, however, they came in contact with Russian officials, they were to

be respectful, lift their hats and bow, and reply to all questions with the answers they had committed to memory.

To cloak his administrative offices more effectively, Kapustin instituted the "Orphans' Home", founded ostensibly to care for orphans, widows and aged. Such an institution was unnecessary because the Dukhobors living in patriarchal households, oftentimes presided over by a great-grandfather, were in the habit of seeing to the security of everyone beneath the family roof. Thus the Orphans' Home was virtually a seat of government and a treasury. Within its spacious wooden walls, virgins were trained to sing the psalms handed down from generation to generation, the words of this "Living Book" being memorized and never put into writing.

Thus grew and solidified the early Dukhobor colonies and faith. Thus persisted the Dukhobor teachings, some phases of which had curious repercussions. For example, Dukhobors conscripted into the imperial army threw away their guns during the Russian-Turkish war of 1806-12. The few Russian troops engaged in this conflict were withdrawn when Napoleon marched on Moscow. Subsequently, when the Dukhobors heard that Moscow had been burned, and that almost all the French soldiers had died on the way back to France, they considered these tragedies as God's punishment for believing in war.

The authorities in St. Petersburg looked with favor on the industrious settlement of the Milky Waters, which had brought a degree of agricultural development greater than any before known to the Romanov dynasty. But as the word of the Dukhobors' prosperity spread to other parts of Russia, and more peasants petitioned their local governors to be allowed to join the colony, it seemed to the authorities that the Dukhobors persuaded men to abandon the Orthodox church.

Lenient as Alexander I was in the early years of his reign, he did not favor proselytizing. It is unlikely that the Dukhobors were proselytizing at this stage; they were too self-contained, suspicious of outsiders and prosperous to interest themselves in converts. However, several men were arrested on charges of perverting the Orthodox. After being questioned in prison, they were released because the evidence was not sufficient to convict them. The church then lent a hand to the state and, in February of 1816, Father Nalimski was sent into the settlement with instructions to question the people carefully. On the evening of his arrival he got drunk and challenged some heretics to a fight. For this untimely

behavior, he was sentenced to four months imprisonment in a monastery.

The local officials of church and state were not satisfied that the Dukhobors were guiltless of seeking converts. That summer, Kapustin was arrested. Although he was seventy-five years of age and in ill health, he was imprisoned and subjected to prolonged questioning. "Whom have I perverted?" he asked repeatedly. And the authorities could produce no satisfactory witness. When the Dukhobors sent a delegation to Langeron, military governor of Kherson, requesting him to intervene on behalf of Kapustin, Langeron—so the delegates said—shouted: "You know neither God nor emperor; were I emperor, I would shoot you down with cannon and muskets."

Langeron's reputed attitude was not condoned by the Tsar, and the governor was informed from St. Petersburg: "His Imperial Majesty considers the measures such as you would take, would not reform the Dukhobors, but only further incense them."

Langeron, indignant with the Dukhobors for reporting him, denied he had said he would like to "shoot them down with cannons and muskets." The Dukhobors, he wrote to the Tsar, were people who had no religion whatsoever, "having neither churches nor priests, nor admitting the sacraments." He asked that he be allowed to obtain satisfaction from the Dukhobors for their false accusation, but Alexander I dismissed the squabble with, "In accordance with the rules of the Christian religion, one must forgive one's neighbor every injury." Moreover, Alexander's minister of the interior, Kozodoeff, a member of the St. Petersburg Bible Society, had sympathy for sectarians, which furthered Alexander's lenient attitude.

Kapustin was released on bond. Subsequently, the Dukhobors said, he died and was buried near the village of Horelovka, November 8, 1817. Local Russian authorities, suspicious of this story, had the alleged body of Kapustin unearthed and found it red-bearded and with mustaches. Despite the fact that Kapustin's hair was not red, nor was he in the habit of wearing mustaches, the Dukhobors stuck to their story. Undoubtedly Kapustin invented his own death as the most satisfactory way of avoiding further trouble. He lived on, a hermit in a cave, grew a long white beard, altered his posture to a stoop, and continued to direct the affairs of the sect through apostles who visited him.

At this time the Dukhobors were recognized by the tsarist government, as on equal basis with the Mennonites, a Quakerish

German sect whose members had been invited to Russia and guaranteed religious freedom because of their proven agricultural ability. Not far from the Dukhobor and Mennonite settlements, was a settlement of Molokans, Russian sectarians with views somewhat similar to the Dukhobors. Each group considered itself superior to the other, and, as the Mennonites continued to speak German, there was little intercourse between them. St. Petersburg, anxious to encourage efficiency in agriculture, was tolerant of sectarians capable of tilling the soil well and raising livestock. Thus the Dukhobors, Molokans, and Mennonites enjoyed a favored position of semi-independence as compared with that of other peasants in Russia.

Foreign opinion of the Dukhobors of this period is therefore of interest. When Alexander I was in England in 1814, he conversed with several Quakers who were curious about Dukhobor religious fervor and who inquired about the welfare of the Dukhobor, Molokan, and Mennonite colonies. The Tsar gladly invited the Quakers to Russia to judge for themselves. The invitation was accepted, but it was not until May of 1819, that two Quakers, William Allen and Stephen Grellet, arrived at the Milky Waters. Immediately these gentlemen became distressed at the failure of the Dukhobors to give Quaker answers to all their questions. The disappointment of William Allen is somberly reflected in his diary: "29th of Fifth Month . . . There was a studied evasion in their answers, and though they readily quoted texts, it is plain they do not acknowledge the authority of the Scripture, and they have some very erroneous notions . . . My spirit was greatly affected, and I came away from them much depressed."

Orest Novitski, who made a careful study of the Dukhobors and wrote a lengthy thesis on them, was a supporter of the Russian Orthodox Church, and consequently he did not condone the unorthodox opinions. It is of interest, therefore, when Novitski says: "To the credit of the Dukhobors, one must say that they are sober, laborious and frugal; that in their houses and clothing they are careful to be clean and tidy; that they are attentive to their agriculture and cattle-breeding, occupations which have been and still are their chief employment."

Novitski refers to their antipathy to military service and the taking of oaths. In 1820, to remove one of the obstacles and encourage them to become soldiers of the Tsar, the council of state decreed, "without releasing them from any other State obligation, to abstain from compelling them to take the oath in any form

whatsoever." Novitski noted that this was "Imperially confirmed forever." Forever is too long to be covered by the blanket promise of a government.

Saveli Kapustin had left no stone unturned to assure the leadership to his son. An ex-soldier himself, his male children were liable to military service, and to avoid this, Kapustin sent his wife to her people before the birth of the child, thus outwardly repudiating his fatherhood. This child was brought up by his mother's family and was known by their name of Kalmikoff. To be more certain of the leadership passing to his son, Kapustin had assured his followers the spirit of Christ would dwell among them after his death. He intimated that the Holy Spirit would establish itself in his son.

At the death of his father, Vasili Kalmikoff accepted the office of ruler, but he lacked the organizing ability of his parent. He became a drunkard, paid little attention to Dukhobor affairs, and allowed the twelve apostles and thirty elders full sway.

When Vasili Kalmikoff died in 1832, at about forty years of age, his son, Illarion Kalmikoff, then sixteen, nominally inherited the rulership. Illarion, like his father, was dissipated, with the result that the apostles and elders continued to rule. When the "God man" takes to drunkenness anything may happen. Even when such a divinity explains that, for some inexplicable reason, God has ordered him to behave like a sot but that it is unnecessary for the apostles, elders and people to follow his example, confusion must inevitably result.

About this time dark rumors began to seep out from the colony. The Orphans' Home, outsiders heard, had become a place wherein apostles and elders gave themselves up to orgies of feasting, drinking, and lasciviousness; the singing virgins continued to sing, but now were virgins in name only. While the Dukhobors accepted these as necessary parts of God's plan, a few were bold enough to question the scheme of things, whispering of their wavering faith to Molokans, Mennonites, and others beyond the Dukhobor oligarchy. Skeptics unfortunate enough to be discovered, were subjected to torture and threatened with death at the hands of those who constituted themselves an inquisitorial tribunal. Tales of intrigue were followed by persistent accounts of death meted out to all who were found guilty of breach of secrecy, or who had failed in obedience to the ruling faction. In 1834, Tsar Nikolai I approved of an investigation which, official records state, revealed murder approaching a wholesale scale. Mutilated and de-

capitated corpses were unearthed, while the condition of some bodies showed they had been buried alive. The judicial inquiry disclosed twenty-one murders, "in spite of all obstinacy and capacity to conceal secret crimes."

Admitting the prejudice of tsardom which ebbed and flowed against sectarians, it is unlikely that an official inquiry which lasted two years would be an utter fabrication.

Baron A. von Haxthausen, who published a detailed treatise on Prussian land tenure, was invited to Russia by Nikolai I in 1843 to make a similar survey. While in Southern Russia, he lived in the German-speaking Mennonite colony near that of the Dukhobors. From the Mennonites he learned of intimidation, torture and death within the Dukhobor sect; the gist of his account is similar to Russian governmental reports, though the two accounts do not always agree in detail. It would seem that Haxthausen's informers let their imaginations out of control when they told the Baron that four hundred people were murdered out of a population of some 4,000. In his book, *Studien über die inneren Zustände, das Volkleben, und insbesondere die landlichen Einrichtungen Russlands*, he wrote: "The Council of Elders now constituted itself a terrible inquisitorial tribunal. The principle of 'Whoso denies his God shall perish by the sword,' was interpreted according to their caprice; the House of Justice was called 'Paradise and Torture'; the place of execution was at the mouth of the River Milky Waters. A mere suspicion of treachery was punished with torture and death. Within a few years some four hundred people disappeared, leaving scarcely a trace behind . . ."

As a result of the Russian governmental inquiry, Nikolai I banished the Dukhobors to the Wet Mountains of Caucasia. Only those who would join the Russian Orthodox Church were allowed to remain.

Aylmer Maude, an Englishman who years later lived in Russia; and made a study of the Dukhobors, wrote in his book, *A Peculiar People*: "The most seriously implicated together with their families, in all 800 individuals, were moved in 1841 to Caucasia; Illarion Kalmikoff with his family being of the number. In 1842, 800 more were transported, and 1843 another 900. In all, more than 4,000 people went from the Milky Waters to Caucasia. At first only twenty-seven preferred to remain in their former homes." . . .

Caucasia was a frontier, as little governed as the Indian Territory of the United States, before it became the State of Oklahoma.

Bordered by Turkey and Persia on the south, the Black and Caspian Seas on the west and east, the rugged Caucasian Mountains to the north rose as a barrier between Caucasia and Russia proper. The fertile soil, abundant moisture and bright sunshine of the rolling lowlands, made growth of fruits, vegetables and grain feasible, but the roving population did not seriously concern themselves with agriculture. Turks, Tartars, Kurds, Armenians, Persians and Georgians scratched the soil for a living, at times grazing their own herds of sheep, at times raiding the flocks of their neighbors. Nearly every man carried a pistol or musket, or at least armed himself with knife or scimitar.

While the Russian government ruled in the government towns, scant attention was paid to tribal warrings in the outlands, as long as these everyday occurrences did not affect officials. In some sections, feudal princes of various races held sway as landed proprietors, exacting tithes; in turn paying tribute to the government, and making little effort to improve agricultural methods.

Caucasia was already a place of exile. Individuals and small groups of Russians, who refused to conform to the Orthodox faith had been sent there. Cossacks who had turned pacifist were banished there in 1826. On February sixth of that year, a government committee, meeting in St. Petersburg, concluded that: "The utility of this measure is evident; being transported to the extreme borders of Caucasia, and being always confronted by the hillsmen, they must of necessity protect their property and families by force of arms."

When the Dukhobors were first banished to Caucasia, they were restricted to the Wet Mountains, a rocky and treeless range of the Caucasian mountains. The soil of the valleys produced natural hay in quantities, but early frosts precluded the growing of grains, other than barley. Once more, the Dukhobors were left to themselves; the struggle for existence temporarily submerged religious extremism, and again they showed their aptitude for agricultural pioneering.

Illarion Kalmikoff did not long survive the exodus to the Wet Mountains, and the "Holy Spirit" entered his son, Peter Kalmikoff, who assumed the office of "Christ" and ruler.

This brings the historical background of the Dukhobors to about 1850, or almost within oral memory.

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CHAPTER THREE

CAUCASIA

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER the forced exodus from the Milky Waters, the two colonies in Caucasia showed a peasant prosperity which was an object of wonder to Turks, Tartars, and other nomadic tribesmen unaccustomed to such agricultural persistence. In those few years the Dukhobors had plowed many acres of grassland, had built sturdy villages, and had raised herds of sheep, cattle and horses.

As the number of exiles had increased, two settlements had formed. In the first and largest, among the treeless valleys of the Wet Mountains, stock raising far exceeded the planting of grain. In the second, about two hundred miles to the southeast in Elizevetpolsk province—where, early in the exodus, settlement had been forbidden by the government—grain crops, vegetables, fruits and dairying predominated.

In the village of Horelovka, high in the Wet Mountains, was the Dukhobor seat of government. Here the sectarians built an Orphans' Home. These managerial buildings, housing Peter Kalmikoff and his wife, were the only wooden structures of the village, for logs were scarce, the nearest accessible forest being more than a hundred miles distant. The other buildings in Horelovka—as in all villages of the Wet Mountains—were built of earth and rock, their sloping sod roofs gay with grass and flowers in summer, and white with snow in winter.

Peter Kalmikoff enjoyed the privileges of the hereditary office of "Christ" in full. It excused him from having to work with his hands and left him free to hunt game and drink vodka. With his gun slung on his saddle, Peter roamed the country, stopping overnight at this village or that, or camping in the hills with his favorites of the moment. In his early twenties, wiry but not tall, hot-tempered and cynical, he far from typified his followers.

His roving eyes beheld the charm of Lukeria Vasilivna Hubanova, considered the most beautiful girl of both colonies. His choice of her as consort was widely approved. Although only sixteen when she married Peter, Lukeria showed an independence and strength of character unusual in one so young. When he failed to

dominate her and resorted to beating to assert his will as husband, he encountered a resistance which he was unable to overcome. She made plain to him that, while he might be divine in the eyes of his followers, he was not to her; and for this he secretly respected her.

Peter Kalmikoff's divine office allowed him to indulge his tempestuous sense of humor. On one occasion he was about to ride into the village of Slavanka, largest of the Elizevetpolsk settlement, to honor the people with his presence. Word of his coming spread rapidly. In one of the best houses a long table was laid with choice mutton and bowls of finest borsch. Men, women and children assembled to welcome him. Down the dusty main street he came on a fine horse, attended by village elders. His lean, gray, half-wolf hunting dogs surrounded him, their malevolent eyes glaring and their noses sniffing the kitchen smells of the open doorways.

He dismounted in front of the limewashed house wherein the great meal was prepared, returned the greeting of his subjects with a bow, and, "*Sdorovo*, good health."

The elders stood devoutly around the table, waiting for him to tell them where to sit. Instead of speaking, he seated himself and helped himself to mutton.

"Please, Peter, would you tell us where we should sit?" asked an elder apprehensively.

"Robbers!" shouted Peter. "Is that all you can think about? A place to sit? Such as you will not sit with me. I would sooner have my dogs. Bring my dogs here, and get out of my sight, you snakes, I never want to see you again."

Downcast at this outburst but receiving it with a fatalism similar to that of a farmer accepting a hailstorm, the dignitaries shuffled away. The people heard, and the news spread along the street.

"What are you doing to me?" shouted Peter after them. "Would you leave me alone, you Turks? Is this the way you treat me? Come here at once, I tell you."

Two men re-entered the room, their red faces showing thankfulness and trepidation.

"What are you doing standing there?" Peter demanded. "Did I not tell you to bring my dogs? Get them, or you will have something to be sorry for!"

Some of the dogs lay panting in the village street; others were foraging or fighting with the local hounds. The elders tried coax-

ing, then driving them, but the animals curled their lips and moved out of reach.

"See that!" shouted Peter from the doorway, a chop in one hand and a glass of tea in the other. "My dogs will have nothing to do with you. Are you not ashamed of yourselves?"

"Come here, hounds," he called, and several came slinking toward him. "Here! Here! I know you are hungry. Come and sit with me."

He walked to his place, the dogs following cautiously. They needed no invitation. Climbing first to the benches, then jumping onto the table, they wolfed the mutton and vegetables set for thirty men. The table top and its hand-worked linen cover swam in soup. Bowls and wooden spoons clattered to the floor, while Peter Illarionivich Kalmikoff laughed uproariously at the devastation.

Besides satisfying a destructive urge, episodes such as these substituted for a bookkeeping system. If an elder had been withholding funds from the central treasury, Peter's accusation caused money to emerge from its hiding place. The conscience-stricken elder would think, "My, my, Peter knows I'm guilty. Pravda, he knows everything." Moreover, outbursts like this kept the populace in awe, a necessary attitude to ensure continuance of the theocracy.

In the fall of 1864, while hunting in the Wet Mountains near the village of Efremovka, Peter was stricken with a stomach malady, which became aggravated by a severe cold. His hunting mates took him to Alex Makaseyff's rock house in Efremovka and sent Vanusha Kanigan on horseback to Horelovka. Lukeria's gray eyes showed little surprise when Vanusha announced, "Poor Peter is very ill."

With her brother Mikhael Hubanoff, Alex Zubkoff, Ivan Baturin, and several others of importance, she rode to Efremovka. Groups of people, unmindful of the rain, stood in front of the house wherein their ruler lay. Several men came forward, lifted their hats, bowed, and took the horses. In the best room of the house, sunk in a feather mattress of the high wooden bed, Peter Illarionivich Kalmikoff shivered beneath his woollen blankets. He looked aged beyond his twenty-eight years and showed little interest in his visitors.

For three days his groaning and fever continued. And as news of his illness spread, an increasing number of people came to the little village. The continuous sighing of the faithful, the occasional

howling of a dog, and Peter's own incoherent mutterings were the prelude to his end.

"It will be terrible," said Zubkoff, "if he is not able to name our new leader."

"Da, how shall we then decide?" Hubanoff shrugged.

Both these executives felt capable of assuming the position.

"Peter is dying," said Mikhael Hubanoff, feeling guilty over his secret aspirations. "And you, Lukeria," he added, turning to his sister, "you have not yet shed one tear. How can you be so hard-hearted? The other women are sorry, and you his wife . . ."

"When you see me weep," Lukeria answered, "it will be because my brother is two-faced."

Mikhael was silent. Zubkoff looked at his feet, fearing to show his approval, lest he be similarly rebuked. No one said anything. Near the door two women sobbed audibly.

"Who put me into this bed? Do you wish to kill me?" shouted Peter to the amazement of everyone.

"Oh! Oh! Slava Bohu. Praise God, he is getting better," said a woman.

But Peter groaned, muttered and went off into another delirium.

That evening when the ruler's mind cleared, Alex Zubkoff, kneeling beside his bed, asked, "Dear Petushka, tell us in whose charge will you leave us?"

"I leave you to her." Peter pointed a shaking finger at Lukeria. "She will be a better ruler than I have been, you fools. She is the only one among you I am sorry to leave."

Next morning, after messengers on horseback had been dispatched to apprise the Elizevetpolsk settlement of Peter's death and Lukeria's ascent to rulership, Lukeria herself rode back along the wagon road to Horelovka. She had not desired the rulership, but she felt it would not be difficult to be a better ruler than any of the Kalmikoffs had been; possibly the best thing she could do would be to help the people rely more on themselves, instead of expecting the impossible from a "Holy Spirit." She liked the people and they liked her.

Lukeria had abundant vitality and a practical turn of mind. Above average height, black-haired, gray-eyed, complexion like a rose, she had retained most of the beauty of sixteen while gaining poise of womanhood. Her sense of humor, and of values generally, would not allow her to become a "divinity." What she most desired was love, the spiritual and physical union, which

she had not found with her husband. Her attempt later to satisfy this yearning was to be the major incongruity of her rulership.

As she rode toward Horelovka, the sun broke through the clouds for the first time in several days; it shone down, and licked at shallow pools lying in the blue-clay road. Moving southward up the valley, through a mist still clinging to the low levels, was a ghostlike herd of cattle. Herdsmen swung now to the right, now to the left, their rainproof woollen bourkas flowing back over the horses' rumps as if woven of the mist itself. Behind her, the hay and pasture lands stretched eight treeless miles, and rose gradually to the base of the first mountain range obscured now by the valley mists merging with low-hung clouds. A horse and rider came out of Efremovka at a gallop. Lukeria watched him momentarily, wondering who was in such a hurry; then she looked toward Horelovka again. Surrounding the village were the plowed acres from which the barley had been harvested, and, closer in, the cabbage plots looked bare and still as if waiting for the snow of winter. Behind her someone shouted, and she turned to see Mikhael galloping toward her.

"Why did you leave without telling me you were going?" he asked breathlessly and so seriously that she laughed. "It is not a joke," he protested. "It is not right that you should ride alone when you are my sister, and the leader of us all."

"Mikhael, Mikhael, you look so funny that anyone would laugh! I will need you to look after the business with Alex Zubkoff and Ivan Baturin because you can read and write, and you are not altogether a fool. Yet I want you—" her voice hardened—"to remember that you must never tell me what to do or what not to do. There are things I will decide for myself."

The following summer, Lukeria made her first official visit to the Elizevetpolsk settlement. Her departure was a holiday for the Wet Mountains settlement, who escorted her along the wagon road past Efremovka and Orlovka to the gray cliffs at the base of the first mountain range. There, amidst many good wishes and slava Bohus, they watched her covered wagon with its four horses hitched abreast, and her twenty mounted outriders wind their way into the pass. Not once throughout the two hundred-mile journey was the caravan molested. Not once did the proud guards on their fine horses have to draw their scimitars or pistols.

In Elizevetpolsk settlement there was much preparation and excitement. Early on the day she was to arrive, men, women and children left their villages by horseback or wagon to assemble in

a meadow eight miles north of the village of Slavanka. Elizevetpolsk's honorary escort of twenty armed riders, rode thirty miles, to meet her kareta.

On the flower-dotted meadow, where the assemblage waited singing hymns of welcome, even the horses tied to the wagon wheels felt excitement in the sunny air. A thousand men and women in holiday clothes formed the human v at the base of which stood the traditional table covered with a white cloth, and set with a loaf of bread, jar of salt, and jug of water. These three staples, sufficient to sustain human life, symbolized hospitality in accord with old Russian custom.

The measured voices blended, and as from reeds of a vast human organ the melody of a psalm floated toward Lukeria. Even after her driver had dexterously backed her wagon close to the ceremonial table, the people continued singing until the psalm was ended. As the last notes drifted away, faces turned expectantly toward her as she bowed her greeting.

"*Sdorovo jevote*. I hope you are in good health."

"Slava Bohu," they answered, bowing.

"Everyone happy?" she smiled.

"*Spasi Hospodi*. Lord save you. Greeting you on your auspicious coming, we welcome you to us."

Lukeria gave greetings and messages from the people of the Wet Mountains. Everything was very good there. The winter's snow had been deep but the weather was not too cold. Hay was plentiful, the sheep were not much bothered by wolves.

"For many years our people have lived where trees grew, and it is nice to see the trees here. By Horelovka we have only those we planted. Again this spring, our men went many miles with horses and wagons to bring back young trees to plant. They put some near my house, for which I am grateful. Those trees may seed themselves so that one day there will be a forest so large that our people will have to be careful not to get lost in it," she said, with eyes laughing.

Her smile was reflected in the faces of even the very small children; already everyone thought of her as "Lushetchka," an affectionate derivative of Lukeria.

"Lushetchka," interrupted a stout old lady, with hands clasped in front of her green apron, "tell us why trees grow not in the valley of Horelovka where there is much rain?"

"They grow well when we plant them, *babushka*, but they were not there when we came; why, I do not know, except that a gov-

ernment man from Tiflis told me that, very long ago, before there were any tsars in Russia, there were many trees in the Wet Mountains, but the people did not stop cutting them until even the little ones were burned for firewood, and there were no seeds left."

"Tak. I think that was very bad," commented a woman with a florid face and a nose like a button. "It would be like eating all the chickens so there would be no eggs, and soon no chickens."

At this analogy two young women in crimson skirts and blue velvet bodices laughed in high spirits. Like the sun and the breeze on the flowers of the meadow, and Lushetchka's warm smile, their merriment was infectious, and others joined in the laughter as if they had been awaiting such an opportunity.

Grandfather Popoff's shoulders shook with happiness. It welled up and filled his blue eyes with tears. "Slava Bohu! Lushetchka! he said "I bow low to the God within you and hope you will live long with us in the Spirit of Christ." The old man knelt and touched his forehead to the grass.

"Slava Bohu," echoed another patriarch, kneeling beside Grandfather Popoff.

Then, as if an unseen hand had pressed down on their heads, the assemblage of 2,000 men and women bowed low.

These semioriental prostrations made Lukeria uneasy, yet she was at loss for words to express her disapproval and yet not hurt their feelings.

They rose as one, with the ponderous precision of a trained elephant.

"I am only a woman," Lukeria reminded them, "so do not expect too much of me. We must all work together to increase our prosperity, and we must live at peace with ourselves and everyone."

She left her wagon, signifying the end of the formal meeting, and talked with the people who pressed close around her. After all had joined in a happy hymn, there was more conversation and the men went to hitch the horses.

Lukeria climbed into her own wagon where her maids were seated. Her driver cracked his whip; the Verigin wagon swung in behind, followed by the Katelnikoff wagon, after which came more than one hundred vehicles. Young men on saddle horses spread out to each side of the mounted escort and the procession moved along the rolling, wooded country to Slavanka.

Though the Dukhobors continued to say, "We are all equal and none among us is greater than another," social precedence to the

Verigin and Katelnikoff families was conceded in Elizevetpolsk. The two families were the wealthiest of the settlement. They owned between them several thousand horses, cattle and sheep; and employed—besides Turkish herdsmen—Dukhobors who had either no establishments, or such small ones that it was necessary for them to hire out their labor. This material inequality began in the Milky Waters when communal ownership was abandoned. In Slavanka, the Verigins owned the one large store, while the Katelnikoffs owned the flour mills.

The Verigins were related to Lukeria Kalmikova by marriage. Anastasia Verigina was an aunt of Peter Kalmikoff. Lukeria, who, when visiting Slavanka, slept in the best room of the Verigin's oak log house, affectionately called Anastasia, "*Natusha*." Lukeria also liked Vasili Verigin and all the children. But it was young Peter Vasilivich Verigin who particularly charmed her. He was seven now, and this was the first time she had seen him since he was four. Tall for his age, well proportioned, he had gray eyes with a Tartar slant, black hair, and an intelligent face.

Each morning, Peter, with his younger brother Gregori, went to Lukeria's room. Standing side by side, they recited childrens' psalms. "What intelligent boys," she would say, giving them sweets and nuts, after which Peter and Gregori knelt, bowed, and left the room with a mixed feeling of excitement and solemnity.

Peter glowed with self-esteem when she praised him. To him, Lukeria was the greatest person in the world, for besides being ruler of the Dukhobors, she fascinated him. He felt himself greater than the other boys in the village, and Lukeria's open adoration confirmed his opinion. Meditating on it, he decided that he had been born on Peter's Day for some particular reason. The annual Dukhobor religious celebration of June 29—his birthday—was more than a coincidence to him.

Much of Lukeria's time in Slavanka was taken up with giving advice. For instance, Andrei was a poor man, and his milk cow had died, so what should he do?

"Go home Andrei, you shall have a cow and a good one too, but you must try to drink less vodka; a man of your age should know better," Lukeria advised.

Andrei blushed until his cheeks became the color of his nose. "*Spasibo, spasibo*, thank you, thank you," he said, twisting the leather peak of his cap, bowing and backing toward the door. "Slava Bohu. May the Almighty God keep you safely."

Lukeria's ability to remember fragmentary information about

her subjects, supplemented by her intuition, made further investigation than this unnecessary. To procure a cow for Andrei, she commended a wealthier Dukhobor for his "Christian way of life," mentioning that, "poor Andrei has no milk cow. Da, it is a pity he drinks too much, but perhaps we can help him by showing our brotherly love."

The wealthy Dukhobor presented a cow to Andrei, feeling himself well repaid by Lukeria's approbation. Andrei's allegiance to Lukeria saved him from getting drunk during the entire month.

"Lushetchka, dear Lushetchka, I am so very worried and have for a long time been thinking to myself about what I did," began a muzhik. After assuring Lukeria he believed in "never killing anyone," he related how one night he and his wife heard a loud noise coming from their vegetable storehouse. Rousing his sons, and four other men, he cautiously opened the door leading from the house to the storeroom, but they found no one. Then they opened the door to the horse stable, then to the cow stable. From the cow stable they went into the sheep shed and saw the sheep in a state of agitation; the door leading to the yard was open. They heard a scraping of horses' hoofs and muffled cursing in Turkish.

"I ran to the door," he related, "and saw two men on horses, each with something big tied to his saddle. 'Postoi, wait,' I shouted, but they were already leaving my yard. I lifted my rifle and fired once. One man fell and the other galloped away. When the watchman came I said to him, 'What have you been doing? Sleeping?' We all went carefully up to the bundle lying on the ground. He was dead, and he was a Turk, and wrapped around his wrist was a rope which was tied to a sack. We opened the sack and inside, just as I thought, was a stunned sheep. Oh, Lushetchka, Lushetchka, I have often thought—Was it right for me to kill him?" he asked, wringing his hands.

"If he was married," said Lukeria, "and if his wife liked him, it might have been very sad when he did not come home, and that time she would be sorry he was stealing sheep. I know how badly you feel that you killed him. Possibly you did not have enough watchmen? It is always better to hit a robber over the head with a long root than it is to kill him. Tak. But it has happened and you must not feel badly."

His face brightened; he thanked Lukeria many times, and went away feeling as cheerful as a conscience-stricken Dukhobor could.

Quite differently did she deal with the complaints of a wife

whose husband had beaten her. Her sentence was to order the husband to stay naked in a lousy chicken house overnight, and sometimes more than one night. There, among the hens blinking suspiciously at him, he felt as if their uneasy croakings were accusing him. With his toes in the cold slime of the floor, his head itching, the lice gnawing avariciously at his hide, he scratched repentantly through the night. At dawn he had the additional humiliation of having village wives stare at him icily as he emerged from the henhouse.

A man had the choice of taking his punishment or leaving the sect. In a case of being sentenced for wife beating, it is unlikely that his wife and family would leave with him, while a man with neither wife, family nor tribe, was far from being an economic unit in those days. Disregarding the inconvenience of having to do everything for himself—including the making of his own boots and clothing—he would be exposed to marauding horsemen. Thus an individual leaving the Dukhobors would be forced to join another sect, or one of the roving tribes, or enter the service of a landlord, or enlist in the imperial army. So it is understandable why “good men and bad” preferred to remain within the fold, and how economic necessity played an important part in the gregariousness of the Dukhobors.

When Lukeria left Slavanka to return to her seat of government, Peter Vasilivich Verigin and his mother rode with her to the outskirts of the village.

“Natusha,” Lukeria whispered to Peter’s mother, “treat him very kindly, for remember what you have promised. He belongs to me. There will come a time when I will take him away with me to the Wet Mountains. He will be needed for God’s work, but all this you must keep secret now. Slava Bohu!”

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CHAPTER FOUR

LUKERIA

THIRTEEN YEARS went by under the rule of Lukeria Vasilivna Kalmikova; thirteen years of increasing prosperity, with a minimum of trouble, and no conflict with the Russian government. This fortunate position was, in 1877, due, in part to the tolerance of the Grand Duke Mikhael Nikolaivich Romanov, governor of Caucasia, and his friendliness toward Lukeria. The occasions on which the Grand Duke Mikhael had visited Horelovka, Lukeria, diplomat that she was, missed no opportunity to further the relations between her followers and the imperial government.

Mikhael, thoughtful and quiet-mannered, preferred to get along with people rather than quarrel, and there were other considerations. He found Lukeria's personality pleasing, and her hospitality in the Wet Mountains a refreshing change from officials, and semioriental Tiflis. The agricultural development of the Dukhobors was most acceptable, for his brother, Alexander II, was preparing for war against Turkey, with a view to "freeing the Christians in the Balkans from Turkish yoke, and extending the Russian Empire south to Constantinople." The Dukhobors, now numbering about 12,000, had made available increased food supply for the army. Their saddle horses, larger than Cossack ponies, were being purchased for the cavalry, while their heavier horses were excellent for artillery and transport. In this frontier area of 1877, railway communication was limited; the rugged Caucasian Mountains formed a natural barrier between Caucasia and Russia proper, while Ottoman naval predominance on the Black Sea enhanced the value of a ready supply of primary necessities in the probable war zone.

The Dukhobors, pleased to profit by the sale of their produce to the imperial government, were equally pleased at their exemption from army service. Though military conscription had been introduced into Caucasia by an act of 1874, the Dukhobors—officially a penal settlement under the terms of their exile—remained exempt. Their practical relationship to the imperial government was peculiarly favorable, as they enjoyed privileges

similar to those of landlords, without being required to do battle "For Faith, for Tsar, and for Fatherland"; nor were they heavily taxed.

The business of the sect was being efficiently managed by Alex Zubkoff, Mikhael Hubanoff, and other executives of the Orphans' Home. Favorable circumstances, the suitable climate of the Wet Mountains for stock raising, the warm soil of Elizevetpolsk for grains, vegetables and fruits, combined with hard work and thrift to produce a prosperity among them greater than any before or after.

In the spring of 1877, Russia declared war on Turkey. Those were the romantic days when nations had reached the stage where, while they "regretted" making war on one another, nevertheless they openly called it war and still made formal declarations of it. "Russia does not desire war," Tsar Alexander II reiterated in both Moscow and St. Petersburg. The Grand Vizier of Turkey proclaimed: "It is not Turkey that wants war, but Russia . . . We must free the oppressed Mussulman people of Caucasia sweating under the Russian yoke."

Grand Duke Mikhael Nikolaivich, governor of Caucasia, had an old-fashioned ring in his territorial proclamation in that it made no pretense of peace. In another way, he was ahead of his time; he proclaimed war in Caucasia almost a week before his brother Alexander declared it in St. Petersburg!

The Russian government's desire to abstain from antagonizing any of the sections of Caucasia's mixed population is evident in the speeches of General Loris-Melikov and reflected in the treatment accorded the Dukhobors. In virtual command of the army of Caucasia, this soldier-diplomat, regarded in St. Petersburg for imperial purposes as a "real Russian," hastened to assure the Armenians of Caucasia: "The Russian Tsar does not make war on you, brothers and sisters; he has not the least idea of attempting to alter your religion and customs. . . . You know I am not of Russian origin, I belong to the Armenian Church, and my mother tongue is Armenian. Very well, that has not prevented me from becoming commander of the troops of the Russian Tsar . . ."

Speaking in a Tartar area, the general pointed out that the Russian army "has more than one Tartar general." In a district where Circassians predominated, he spoke of a Circassian who had been made a general and hinted there might be others. He promised the Mohammedans that the Emperor would "reward those of you who live peacefully and do not resist our troops."

In the summer of 1877, Russian troops were still laying siege to the Mussulman city of Kars, east of the Black Sea. Osman Pasha's forces inside the beleaguered city resisted, while, on the Black Sea, Turkish ships-of-war made transportation increasingly difficult for the Russians who found themselves short of ammunition and supplies.

Turning to all possible sources for increased transport, Grand Duke Mikhael ordered his carriage northward to the Wet Mountains. After jolting through the night along the rock and clay wagon road, he reached Horelovka and was welcomed by Lukeria.

"Mikhael Nikolaivich, you look very tired," she said. "When they told me your carriage was coming I prepared a meal."

"Spasibo, thank you, Lukeria Vasilivna, I would enjoy food. And I have something of importance to say. I cannot stay long."

"But Mikhael Nikolaivich! A comfortable bed will be ready for you, and you should have some sleep as soon as you have eaten."

The Dukhobors, who customarily addressed their own rulers by their first names, similarly approached imperial personages, especially those toward whom they felt friendly. Nor did their approach to "the great" seem illogical, when all who call themselves Christians think of Jesus simply as Jesus, and never as "His Highness" or "His Holiness."

While the people of Horelovka and neighboring villages gossiped and speculated concerning the purpose of this visit, Mikhael ate borsch and mutton; and talked to Lukeria of the war in Caucasia. The Emperor's soldiers were very brave, he said, and the Cossacks were splendid in fighting the Turks and foraging supplies.

It would have been much better if England had not supplied money and guns to Turkey. The English-made rifles were superior to those of the Emperor's soldiers. Russia did not want to lose Caucasia, but many Russian troops were fighting west of the Black Sea along the River Danube. If Alexander's courageous army was forced to retreat north of the Wet Mountains, it would mean disaster to the Dukhobors. Their sheep, cattle and horses would be stolen and their villages pillaged. Then they would have the choice of remaining under Turkish yoke, or escaping north to Russia. In the latter event, should Alexander exert himself to help them? There would be other people to look after, men who had fought, widows and children of those who had died for the Fatherland. If Turkey won in Caucasia, possibly the best the Dukhobors could hope for would be serfdom.

"It is very bad," Lukeria sighed. "Our people do not wish to fight in the army. It is against our religion."

"It is not my brother's wish that you fight as soldiers at this time," Mikhael helped himself to lemon and sugar for his tea. "The Emperor understands such would be contrary to your religion. Nor do I suggest you take up arms, but you should immediately arrange to assist our army transport. Four hundred four-horse steel-axle wagons hauling ammunition overland would be of great help until we are able to sweep the Turkish ships from the Black Sea. You have the wagons, the horses, and the drivers, who, I promise you, will be well paid for their work. Will you see, Lukeria Vasilivna, that a transport is organized with the least possible delay?"

"Would our people always be behind the line of fire?" she asked.

"Always, I promise you."

She had made up her mind to the compromise. It was better for her people to haul ammunition when they would not themselves be killed nor have to kill anyone. Better to do this than to refuse Mikhael Nikolaivich and have trouble.

"I will call Alex Zubkoff, Ivan Baturin and my brother Mikhael," she said. "I will explain to them, before you go. I think I can promise you now that we will have the wagons ready, but first I must send men on horseback to every village in the Wet Mountains and every village in Elizvetpolsk, to ask our people to decide for themselves what they will do."

Zubkoff, Hubanoff and Baturin, the businessmen, came to Lukeria's house. She explained to them the request of Mikhael Nikolaivich. They agreed, Zubkoff attempting to feign polite condescension as if he were doing the grand duke a favor.

"It is a pleasure to help," said Hubanoff, smirking and rubbing his hands.

"I'm sure it is," smiled the grand duke.

All three trustees of the Orphans' Home welcomed the prospect of added income; more gold coins would accrue to the strong box.

Mikhael Nikolaivich, a good morning's work accomplished, accepted Lukeria's invitation to sleep in a bed for a few hours. He was almost asleep when he heard the rhythmic thumping of horses cantering. The messengers had left for the villages.

In Effremovka, Tambovka, Orlovka, Rodionovka, Spasovka, and Bashkitshtet—all the villages of the Wet Mountains, and in

Slavanka, Novaspasovka, Troitska and all the villages of Elizevetpolsk, the envoys of Lukeria called meetings and put to the people the question of organizing a transport for the army. At every meeting in every village the messengers were asked the same question: "What does Lushetchka think we should do?" The envoys replied; "She thinks we should haul the supplies for Mikhael Nikolaivich Romanov and his army." And the meetings agreed unanimously. "Then," said the messengers to Elizevetpolsk, "Lushetchka wishes you to start early tomorrow morning as it may take a week to drive the two hundred miles to Horelovka. There she wishes all the wagons to meet, each with their driver and helper, so that she will speak to everyone at the same time."

Within two weeks from the morning of Lukeria's promise to the grand duke, the broad valley of Horelovka was an encampment of canvas-covered wagons, horses, fodder, tents and men. Women, men and children, from near-by villages of the Wet Mountains visited with the men from Elizevetpolsk settlement, asked about crops and gardens, inquired after relatives. Some of the wagoners shined their horses, others leaned on their wagons smoking *paperosa*, or sat on their heels, talking and reaching into the red aprons of the women for sunflower seeds.

"She is coming; Lushetchka is coming now," shouted a man above the buzz of voices.

Conversation momentarily ceased. All turned their heads to watch her four white horses coming from the yard of the Orphans' Home.

"What will she say?" asked a large-boned and broad-shouldered woman with pale-blue eyes.

"I hope she has already told the grand duke that our men are not to be wounded in a battle," said a woman whose apron strings sank out of sight like tight twine around the middle of a full bag of grain.

"*Nichevo!* No matter! No need to worry," said an old man. "Lushetchka will look after everything. If I were young I would go too. Look how all these young fellows are enjoying it already. What a time they will have!"

Lukeria's wagon stopped on the knoll kept clear for her. Her address to the men of the Dukhobor transport, was brief:

"You have decided at this time," she said, "to aid military action, even though indirectly. We have all considered it best to do this, but you must not take the life of one of the enemy. That I ask you never to forget. And let no one man among you disgrace

us by looting from the Turks. It is not for us to steal from them because Turkish robbers have sometimes stolen our sheep. That would not be the Christian way. You will remember that Christ said, 'Do unto others as you would have done unto you.' "

She asked them to be kind to the wounded of both sides, then God would be with them, and soon they would safely return to their villages. Slava Bohu!

Amid the squeak of harness, the knocking of hoofs against wagon poles, and the shouting of a thousand men, the horses were hitched four abreast to the four hundred wagons. Leather-peaked caps and sheepskin hats rose like bees disturbed in a meadow, as drivers and loaders clambered up the wheels to their seats. Preceded by some thirty mounted outriders, who were to scout for marauders and treacherous places in the mountain road, the wagons swung into line. The men and women who stayed behind still shouted "Slava Bohu!" The gray line of canvas and shifting dust stretched across the green valley toward the cliffs of the first mountain range, and so rumbled on to Alexandropol, army base for the siege of Kars.

The Dukhobor transport did its work well. Grand Duke Mikhael paid the wages promised. Not a man was killed, though several were wounded behind the firing line. Allegiance to Lukeria Vasilivna grew even greater because of this safe and profitable venture. Before snow came, the city of Kars had fallen to the Russians, who pushed on toward the Dardanelles. The Dukhobors returned to their villages, where, through winter, evenings their wives, children and grandparents heard stories of war and death.

In the spring of 1878, the Russian advance on Constantinople stopped, due to a combined threat of England, France and Germany, who again blocked Russia in what, otherwise, would have been a successful attempt to bring coveted Turkish seaports under the double eagle of the tsars. Russia retired from the gates of the Ottoman capital, but retained part of southeastern Caucasia formerly under Turkish rule. Thus the city of Kars became the seat of government for the newly formed Kars province, and the military center for all Caucasia.

Desirous of furthering agricultural development in the new province, the Russian government invited Dukhobors to settle there. Lukeria was pleased to accept the invitation, especially on behalf of part of the expanding population of Elizavetpolsk province where there was little good land left close to the settlement. Kars province, to the west of Elizavetpolsk, was nearer the Black

Sea, the soil richer, climate more favorable. Besides, the new settlers would be closer to Horelovka, the Dukhobor seat of government. Those who moved from Elizetvetsk were mostly young couples, whose parents had insufficient land, and older men and women not materially prosperous. The Verigins, Katelnikoffs, with other wealthy families, continued to live in Slavanka.

Peter Vasilivich Verigin, who had taken the fancy of Lukeria was now nineteen. He had not been with the transport. He had stayed home in the village, working in his father's store. In the winter of 1877-78, Russian soldiers had been billeted in the homes of the villagers and typhus had broken out. Peter Vasilivich, stricken with the fever, was delirious during two weeks. More than six feet tall, broad-shouldered, strongly built, he tossed and raved so that all his brothers were required to hold him in bed, while his mother and sisters put snow bags on his head. His raving ceased as suddenly as it had begun. His muscles became limp, his lips gray and silent. He became weaker and weaker. When incantations failed, his mother prepared his death clothes, while relatives and close friends of the family recited psalms at his bedside. Dunia Katelnikova, the girl who used to walk with him past the mill pond in the evenings, looked down at his sunken eyes and thought she would not see him alive again. Two men with a sleigh were sent to the Wet Mountains to apprise Lukeria of Peter's approaching end, but somehow he lived through the night. The next day, miraculously enough, he took such a turn for the better that two more messengers with the good news were dispatched to overtake those with the bad tidings. The four messengers reaching Horelovka together, saw, for the first time in their lives, Lukeria in a state of agitation. Her hands trembled, she tried to smile through her tears, "He must not die, I know he will not. It would be too terrible."

Peter Vasilivich got steadily better as the snow melted, and spring gave way to summer. On his twentieth birthday, he was in good health.

Dukhobor tradition has it that the weather is invariably favorable on Peter's Day. The *bolshoi* hayfield, a few miles from Slavanka, where all Elizetvetsk settlement celebrated each year, was gay with flowers. Milk-white daisies, with yellow centers; Turk's-cap lilies, their reddish heads nodding in the breeze, and blue cornflowers making deeper obeisance on their slender stalks, all spreading like a great patchwork quilt toward the oak trees at the rim of purple hills. On the roads between the villages, red and

green wagons, carrying families and their provisions for the day, rumbled toward the great hayfield. There were greetings from one wagon to another, and the gay laughter of girls rose above the hum of conversation. Younger men, mounted on their best horses, flashed in and out of the line of wagons.

As the sun rose higher over the meadow, the confusion of arrival gradually subsided and the elders prepared for the ordered routine of religious observance. To the right of the ceremonial table, with its white cloth, some of the older men in somber blue beshmets formed to recite a psalm, while several grandmothers took their places to the left. Groups of men and women who were conversing here and there came to join the ceremony, and soon a large human v spread out in the meadow.

Except for the snort of a horse and a lark singing, there was silence. They spoke first a short psalm, "Praised be Almighty God," their voices droning along the meadow. Then, as if from a vast organ, came the throbbing notes of a psalm in song. A powerful, yet evasive melody defying retention by unaccustomed ears. On and on. The cadences rose and fell, like a child crying in the wilderness, like a wolf baying at the moon. Elemental, primitive music, woven in its own peculiar pattern, telling of preordained loneliness and longing, with here and there a soaring phrase of hope; the whole underlaid with bass tones reaching down into the earth's bowels. A collective acquiescence in life's melancholy, as cries the loon alone on a spruce-rimmed lake. And through it a thread of stolid persistence akin to that agrarian realism of the Dukhobors, which alternates so amazingly with their credulous mysticism.

When the last notes had floated away in the flower-scented breeze, Vasili Verigin, father of Peter Vasilivich, spoke a psalm as the assemblage stood with bowed heads:

"So says the Lord: 'The heavens are My throne; the earth is My footstool. Wherever I may rest is My home, for is not all this the work of My hands? Who will My eye rest on with pleasure: the gentle, the silent and those that fear My word.' The Lord is ever near those of contrite heart; He will save those of humble spirit. He who obeys the will of God, him God will also hear. Higher, superhuman qualities do not exist in churches, and things of lower plane receive life only from human hands. Physical baptism is not true prayer before God. Oft repeated motions of ritual gladden the heart of the devil, but we pray to the only God, maker of heaven and earth. God is the spirit, God is the word,

God is the man. Well it is to bow down before the true God and the true Spirit. Slava Bohu! Let us all bow to Almighty God."

As one they knelt to the ground, touching their foreheads to the grass.

Then came the "Godly ceremony of kissing in brotherly and sisterly love." Beginning with the most devout men and women who formed the closed end of the v-shaped assembly by the ceremonial table, one by one they stepped from their places to face their neighbor, bowed three times, then joining hands, kissed three times. The ceremony continued throughout three hours, but it was not possible for everyone to kiss everyone else in that length of time. Though there were some who had not taken part, the sun was high, and the assemblage showed sign of restlessness. Even the elders were getting hungry, so the religious service was brought to a close with the singing of another psalm.

All went to their wagons to make the meal; women prepared the vegetables and freshly killed mutton; men carried wood to the fires blazing under copper pots hanging on iron chains from wooden tripods. There was much eating, some laughter, and singing of hymns until the sun sank low in the west. Then the wagons, merging with the dusk, rumbled back to the villages.

When the stars were bright and the old folk of Slavanka were sleeping in their beds, Peter Verigin and Dunia Katelnikova walked past the mill, along the bank of the millstream where it turned southward through the oak trees. There, beneath the gnarled branches, he held her close; while she closed her eyes to shut out the stars.

Summer gave way to winter, and, while the snow was still on the ground, tongues were wagging in Slavanka. A month after the marriage ceremony for Peter and Dunia, her girl child died at birth.

When Lukeria heard of the marriage, she was furious. As soon as the snow-blocked road out from the Wet Mountains became passable for wheels, she ordered her covered wagon and twenty outriders to Slavanka. As the party hurried southward, her maids, dismayed by her impatience, spoke only when spoken to during the tense and unpleasant journey. Not once throughout the two hundred miles did Ivan the driver sing his songs; and even the horses, their ears moving back and forth as if to hear the reason for such unusual behavior, knew that all was not as it should be.

The Dukhobors of Elizevetpolsk as usual assembled on the edge of the settlement to greet her. To them she gave little out-

ward sign of her own feelings but the ceremony was soon ended. Lukeria invited Anastasia Verigina, Peter Verigin's mother, into her wagon. She was a woman who avoided friction whenever possible, and had been dreading this meeting. Now her shoulders drooped a little and in her eyes were sorrow and apprehension.

Lukeria seemed not to notice, her gray eyes adamant. Her questions and accusations followed one upon another with such relentlessness, that, at first, it would have been useless for Anastasia to attempt an answer.

"Anastasia, tell me quickly, how did you let it happen? Have I not always said he is mine, and someday I would take him with me? What does this marriage mean? *Bojemoy!* My God! Oh, why was not everything stopped in time? It is terrible. You, his mother, should have known better."

Not once did Lukeria accuse Peter himself. He, for some mysterious reason, like a Dukhobor ruler of old, seemed beyond reproach. Anastasia's brown eyes were filled with tears, and not until her shoulders shook with sobbing did Lukeria relent.

"Natusha, what is the matter? Forgive me. But tell me what we should do?"

"Never have I felt so badly," cried Anastasia. "But what can we do? It has been done. God knows I did not wish it. Yet it is done."

Lukeria, sorry now for the mother, put her arm around her. Anastasia dried her eyes, and what little was said the rest of the way to Slavanka was not concerning Peter's marriage.

At the Verigin home, greetings were exchanged and commonplaces discussed with noticeable strain during the meal. To lessen the tension, Anastasia had arranged that Dunia go home to the Katelnikoffs. Peter attempted to cover his mixed feelings of discomfort and vanity at being the center of attraction. He talked about the cattle and horses, becoming more nonchalant and self-assured as he observed in Lukeria's indulgent glances that she was not angry with him. He had no thought of changing her attitude, but, feeling a storm would break soon, excused himself and left the table.

"Poor Peter! He is still only a boy, and I feel so very sorry that something regrettable has happened in his life," began Lukeria.

As everyone was expecting, the conversation turned to the affair in earnest. Peter's brothers and sisters for the most part kept silent. Gregori did not like Dunia, "the thin one," so he did not defend her. Besides, he did not wish to be disappointed in the

pleasure of basking in additional reflected glory when his brother became aide to the "Queen." Varvara, the most handsome sister, felt that all was not fair to Dunia, but she was not strong enough to protest.

Peter's father, Vasili, was the only one who spoke up to Lukeria. "It is not fair, Lukeria Vasiliivna, to blame us. He is my son, da, but he is not like a horse I can watch in the daytime and keep in the stable at night. Tak, he is a grown man and what has happened has happened."

Vasili's logic made Lukeria more impatient. She waited no longer to say what she had had in mind from the first day she heard of the marriage. "I warned you, Vasili, I warned you all that I would someday take Peter away with me. For what reason?" Her black brows arched and quivered. "For the reason that long ago I set for him a task which makes necessary that I take him to myself—free from all bonds. Therefore, you must now arrange a divorce. This is final!" She rose from the table, her head erect, and went to her room.

Next day, after Vasili Verigin had failed utterly to persuade Lukeria to change her decision, old Gregori Katelnikoff, Dunia's father, argued bitterly, with no success.

She returned to the Wet Mountains, never to visit Slavanka again. How is it that a woman as fair and kindly in all else should in this instance see no blame in Peter, and at the same time, have no compassion for Dunia? Such are the vagaries lurking deep in the most reasonable of humans as if planted there by some divine practical joker, who must know they are to reveal themselves sooner or later.

The Katelnikoffs so bitterly opposed the divorce that it was a year before it became final. The Dukhobors did not customarily go to the Russian courts for marriage, divorce, or anything else, but so anxious was Lukeria Vasiliivna that nothing should later interfere with her possession of Peter, that she had the decree officially sealed in a Russian court.

Late in the fall of 1880, Peter left Slavanka on wheels, but snow overtook him in the Wet Mountains, and he arrived in Horelovka by sleigh.

A month after he left, a son was born to Dunia. He was named Peter Petrovich Verigin, and, years later, in a strange and round-about manner, he was to become divine ruler of the Dukhobors in Canada.

CHAPTER FIVE

SCHISM

LUKERIA, STANDING by her window, watched Peter's sleigh approach across the valley. Her heart beat faster with the ringing of the sleigh bells. At the crunch of his footsteps on the stone walk, she eagerly opened the door to welcome him.

"Sdorovo jevotse! Petushka, I cannot tell you how glad I am that you are here."

"Slava Bohu," he bowed. "And I, too, am pleased to be here, Lukeria Vasilivna." He stood flicking some snow from his black sheepskin hat, not entirely at ease, but with that calm of which he had already made a habit.

"*Kolodno?* Cold?" She put his great coat on the red and blue divan; then, taking his hands, kissed him three times in conventional fashion. "And where is your brother Gregori?"

"Gregori is in the Orphans' Home with your brother Mikhael. He said he would soon come to greet you."

When Gregori and Mikhael Hubanoff came in, Mikhael was careful to conceal his dislike for Peter Verigin. Cautiously he had tried, as her brother and "very good friend," to dissuade her from the venture. Temporarily he resigned himself, trusting that Peter would not interfere in the business management, and hoping that her interest in him would wane.

Zubkoff and Baturin, too, had done their best to persuade her not to have Peter divorced from Dunia. Reasonable in all else, Lukeria flared whenever they dared to offer this advice. Zubkoff shrewdly saw that open criticism would only make her the more determined. Once, when he had almost lost his temper, she ordered him to leave her presence, after declaring she "would make Peter Vasilivich Verigin leader of all the Dukhobors."

The peasants of Horelovka and neighboring villages gossiped, but most greeted Peter with the deference due this handsome young man so close to their ruler. When spring came, he and Lukeria were constantly together. That summer she ordered the best carpenters of Horelovka to build a wooden tower, two stories high, in front of her house. "It will be a shrine," she announced

to the people, "and in it I will teach Peter the ways of God, so that when I am gone the day will come when he will do great things for you."

Only on one occasion some years later, did she allow anyone other than herself and Peter to enter this strange building, which was an object of much awe, speculation and some argument among the faithful. Those who were fortunate enough to be present when she extended the invitation, saw in the single room of the ground floor a plain wooden table and two chairs surrounded by bare walls. Up the winding staircase they went, to peer with curiosity into the round room of the second story. In it were neither table nor chairs, not even a bench. Turkish rugs of brilliant red and blue covered the walls, and the floor as well was soft with them.

To this otherwise reasonable woman, Peter Vasilivich Verigin became an incongruous trinity of mate, child and deity. Thus did she idolize him to a point of absurdity which was to have its repercussions in Dukhobor history.

When not basking in the warmth of her smiles, Peter Vasilivich spent much of his time reading the New Testament, and in introspection. "*Juroshka*, the gloomy one," she called him when she found him in this mood. "Juroshka, you must feel brighter. I want you to shine like the sun." And, her own eyes dancing with affectionate adoration, she would look into his petulant ones until they smiled for her. Then he would tell her of his "Godly thoughts of how everyone should live their lives in the Spirit of Christ." Encouraged by her, he would then and there become a "great man" both in his own eyes and hers.

Though Lukeria left the management of the sect to Zubkoff and her brother Mikhael, she continued to interest herself in the behavior of her people. Vodka drinking had been increasing, and one spring when old Semon in the village of Orlovka became so drunk that he was trampled by a horse, she issued an order that there must be less drinking. Semon's accident, following as it did a Saturday night brawl in Tambovka village, and reports of drunkenness at weddings in Elizavetpolsk and Kars settlements, decided Lukeria to warn men and women to stay away from the bars, kept mostly by Armenians on the outskirts of villages. Concerning weddings, she ordered that no guest should drink more than two glasses of vodka, and when some then stole extra drinks, she limited each man and woman to one. There were Dukhobors

who did not drink at all, drunkenness with them being at no time as prevalent as it was among the Russian peasants generally.

"When on a Saturday night you feel like getting drunk, have instead a very hot bath and stay longer in the *banya*," she advised.

Steam baths had long been an institution with the Dukhobors. On Saturday evenings everyone from grand-grandparents to great-grandchildren went to one of the several bathhouses in the village, and there, stretched out on the long shelves, they sweated freely in the steam given off by water thrown on the hot stove of stone. They found the *Ruski banya* cleansing and relaxing.

As a matter of fact, the cleanliness of the Dukhobors in their clothes, their food and houses, made them less susceptible to epidemics which at times swept Caucasia. When cholera broke out in Kars province, the elders of Terpenia village had guards posted so that no one might enter with the plague. Vasili Vereschagin, the village *storasta*, who had little faith in incantations, saw that the village was kept cleaner than ever.

But in the neighboring village of Kierelovka, cleanliness and quarantine were supplemented by incantation. On the edge of the village, at midnight when the moon was high, twenty-seven virgins met to work the magic formula. Twenty-four of the firm-breasted girls hitched themselves to a plow, and as they bent their backs in the harness, the strip of soil turned from the moving shear. In the furrow between the plow handles walked Tania, while to each side of her walked Grunia and Polia, who, astride their oven rakes, brandished black whips with snakelike thongs. All were dressed in white gowns reaching to their bare feet, their hair loose and flowing over their shoulders, and they sang as they strained at this heavy task of magic.

"*Dol-oi! Dol-oi!* Away with you!" they chanted. And thus did they drive away the "evil spirit" of cholera, while plowing a furrow around the sleeping village to complete the magic circle past which the dread disease dare not come. As the girls returned to the village, the moon faded, and far to the east, above the hills, came the first glow of dawn. Silently they went to bed, for should they be seen, the spell would be broken and the night's work undone.

Kierelovka village was not stricken with the cholera. So it was conceded to fathers and mothers that "all the daughters who that night pulled the plow, were truly virgins."

Incantations were used not only in averting disease but also in an attempt to cure it. As with most agricultural people who in the

course of their work lift stones from the land, as well as other weights, and strain the muscles of the abdomen, some Dukhobor men and women became ruptured. The protrusion was thought to be caused by an animal gnawing within the cavity and afflicting its unfortunate host with pain. To kill the animal, the patient was given small doses of a potion made from the juice of fresh horse manure, herbs, incense and tree bark, along with a drop of quicksilver. This nostrum was prepared in ritual manner, special prayers and incantations being said during the preparation and over the afflicted, by women accredited with supernatural powers. Deep secrecy surrounded the whole proceeding. Though few suffering from hernia died either as a direct result of the affliction or the nostrum, their capacity for work was diminished; and when eventually the ruptured man died of old age or other cause, no one dared cut him open to discover the mysterious animal. Thus, as it was not disproved, the idea of the animal's existence persisted among the more credulous.

Inflammation of the bowels—appendicitis—which in most cases brought death to the patient, as surgery for it was unknown, was sometimes treated by the following formula:

"She who has special power from Almighty God must take a big bowl half filled with water and place it carefully on the belly of the sick person. In the bowl put also some salt, ashes and charcoal, and set in it nine wooden spoons, their handles standing up. Then passing three of the spoons quickly through her fingers and from one hand to the other, she must say:

Almighty have pity on this slave of God,
And take this sickness from him.
I, incanting against this sickness, tell the evil
Spirit it must not stay here inside this man.
Leave him, I say, and into the deep forest go where
The blessed sun and moon may never shine on you,
And you will not find your way back here.

While Lukeria did not forbid incantations for the sick, she discouraged them as "being of little use to help the suffering ones."

Her attitude toward dancing, a social emotional release of peasants the world over, was not of puritanical strictness. During her rulership, dancing was openly enjoyed, though frowned upon as ungodly by many village elders. Secretly at first, on a meadow hidden by rocks or trees, young men and women would congregate

to dance, folk style, to the accompaniment of reed pipes until the ground was tramped black. Everyone went home pleasantly tired and happy. Later, when it was the custom to clear the floor in the village homes at weddings, a few of the flute players became expert on their homemade instruments.

Contrary to Lukeria's attitude toward such amusement among the people, Peter Vasilivich Verigin was of those who looked on dancing as un-Christian. For the most part he confined his condemnation to wearing a holier-than-thou face whenever he witnessed "this practice not becoming to a true Christian."

Feeling his inferiority to Lukeria, manlike he tried to make up for it by posing as an oracle before others. Someday, he thought to himself, they will know how great a man I am. His elephantine smugness, his half-dreamy, half-critical eyes, and the air of superiority which he wore like a suit of clothes, had so annoyed Zubkoff that there was little conversation between them.

While Peter's formal marriage to Dunia had of necessity been a more hasty affair, the steps leading to Dukhobor marriage were customarily elaborate. The succession of ceremonies by which a young man and woman finally became united in wedlock was similar to that which prevailed amongst the peasantry elsewhere in Russia, except that the Dukhobors made use of neither priests nor churches.

In accord with the semioriental tradition, marriage was often of greater concern to the parents than to the young persons involved. In some instances of parent-arranged marriage, the prospective man and wife had not so much as seen one another prior to the initial engagement ceremony. One reason for parental matchmaking was that after the marriage the son with his bride generally lived in the patriarchal home of his parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents. Thus the old folks earnestly discussed the merits of a tentative marriage before taking steps to bring the young people together. Should the matchmakers reach a favorable decision, the first formal step was taken by the parents of the prospective groom. His parents acquired the services of a mutual friend, known as a *svat*, to act as intermediary between the households.

When the prospective bride's parents lived in another village, a way was found to let them know the day on which the *svat*, accompanied by the prospective groom's parents and the groom himself, would call at the bride's home. This initial formal call was usually made in the early hours of the morning. With feigned

surprise and much ceremony the visitors were ushered into the house where the svat promptly put a large bottle of vodka on the table.

Though all were aware of the purpose of the visit, it was considered good form to discuss the weather, crops and other general topics before the svat turned the conversation to matrimony. Soon he began extolling the prospective bride while she listened behind the curtained door. When the svat first asked the bride's mother for her consent, she feigned reluctance. Eventually, as the svat enumerated the virtues of the groom, the bride's mother consented, whereupon the bride-to-be came from behind her curtain and took the hand of the young man. They were then asked if they desired to marry one another, and after giving affirmative answers they knelt in front of their respective parents and received blessings. Thus ended the first ceremony which was called the *svatovstvo*.

Time and place was then set for the engagement celebration, known as the *zapoy*, to which relatives, close friends and neighbors were invited. Happy hymns, much eating and some vodka was the rule when the young couple received good wishes made tangible by presents, usually money. Each gift was acknowledged by the bride and groom kissing one another. Part of the money went to finance the final and most costly celebration, the wedding, or *svadba*.

Usually the entire district joined in the wedding celebration when at long tables the guests sat eating and drinking. Beside the bowls filled with food there were empty bowls conveniently placed to receive gifts of money. Each time a wedding present was dropped in a bowl, the bride and groom, standing at one end of the table, were obliged to kiss for the entertainment of the guests. Amidst merriment and shouts of "a kiss for every kopek" the *svadba* went on until night and exhaustion overtook the guests, and the excited bride and groom were permitted to retire to their marriage bed.

When the homes of the bride and groom were in widely separated villages, the *svadba* was celebrated in each of the villages. Small wonder that when marriages were so carefully planned and thoroughly publicized there were few separations and fewer divorces. Not all marriages were planned by parents. When a young man and a young woman were sufficiently attracted to one another, they confided their desires to their respective parents. And if the old folk thought fit, the *svatovstvo* was proceeded with

in the same manner as if they had thought of the match in the first place.

But a dark cloud came over the peasant joy in weddings and Peter's Day celebrations when the Dukhobors learned of the imperial government's new order involving them in military conscription. The long arm of double eagle bureaucracy was reaching yet farther into this frontier, and for the first time in many years, Dukhobors were obliged to enter the army of the Tsar.

Lukeria was distressed. To whom should she appeal? Her friend, Grand Duke Mikhael, was no longer governor. Zumbatoff, the new governor, was ambitious to show the new tsar, Alexander III, that "Caucasia is now united for God, for Tsar and for Fatherland." Should her followers refuse to become soldiers? To refuse would mean much trouble.

"Peter, tell me what to do?"

He looked at her, then at the wall as if expecting to find the answer. "Christ said, 'Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's.' But are our young men Caesar's? I would say they are not, and if they are not, why should they be given to the Tsar? Yet would it be right for us to strike at the government? Christ said, 'Turn the other cheek.'" After further quotations from the New Testament, Peter said, "I think you should do what you think best."

When she put the question to her followers they as usual declined to decide for themselves, insisting, "What does Lushetchka think we should do?"

Saddled with this responsibility, Lukeria chose to avoid conflict with the government. "I am only a woman, as you know, and it would not be well for me to ask you to go against the government," she told her anxious people. "Someday, when a man is your leader, you will again refuse to be soldiers. At this time there is no war and that is fortunate. It is very sad that young men must leave their wives and families to go far away with the army. May Almighty God bring them safely home again. To those of you who are taken as recruits, remember that in a battle, always shoot over the heads of the enemy so as never to kill anyone. Slava Bohu!"

That summer, all Dukhobor men reaching the age of twenty-one years, received notice to appear in the autumn of the year at the nearest government town for medical examination. There officials of the Tsar conducted the draw. Small pieces of paper were rolled and put in a hat; each young man drawing a marked paper had to serve if he were found medically fit. While the draw was in

process everyone watched with intense interest, searching the faces of the men who had drawn for their expression of relief or dismay. Thus, it was possible to see who had drawn a blank paper and who had been so unfortunate as to find a marked one in his hands. When the officials had secured a sufficient number of men to fill the quota for a year—about ten per cent of those coming of age—the draw was finished. Those who were taken had three years in the army before them, after which they went on the reserve list to be called in time of war. In time of peace the only son of a father was exempt. All able-bodied men from the age of twenty years to forty were subject to call in the event of war.

The three-year term of service was considerably less than that of the twenty-five-year period of army service which had been general in Russia before, but the life of the Russian soldier remained a hard one. For the first six months he was attached on trial to a training unit where he was drilled unceasingly. At the end of this time he was appointed to a regiment, and if he were very tall and good-looking he might find himself in the guards, where service conditions were better than in regiments of the line. If drafted into a line regiment, his billet would be in one of the towns or villages, wherever his regiment happened to be quartered at the time, and such quarters were not generally of the best. If his sleeping place was cold in winter, seldom was he offered the warm shelf above the stove, choice bed of the peasant's hut. In summer months the soldier camped out and went through hard training. His daily pay was one half cent. On the march and in time of war, it was increased to one cent, plus a mess allowance of two cents a day and a ration of meat on other than fast days. In addition, the men received a daily ration of two pounds of flour, a little barley and salt, and they were at times allowed to earn money as laborers along the line of march.

Reluctantly, Dukhobor young men said good-bye to their villages and went away to the army. They saw no adventure to compensate for their life on the land, and there were those who sincerely believed it wrong to kill men under any circumstances.

During the summer of 1886 Lukeria was in poor health, and in the fall of that year, fearing an internal disorder, she journeyed to Tiflis to consult a doctor. "If I should die soon," she told Peter, who went with her to the city, "I would not be unhappy when I know that you will live to carry out the great things you have planned in God's work."

"I will be very sorry if you have to leave me. I will always do as God wills," he said.

While Lukeria's fears were being confirmed in Tiflis, Peter Verigin went to Slavanka. For the first time since he had left his native village, he visited his father and mother, his brothers and sisters, all of whom welcomed him as a great man. He managed to see his divorced wife Dunia alone, though her father would have nothing to do with him. While many people of Slavanka and neighboring villages looked to him with awe, a number saw him as a handsome, dreamy and two-faced pretender, and they sided with the Katelnikoffs against him. His son, Peter Petrovich Verigin, now seven years of age, of fine physique like his father and possessed of an active brain, was already spoiled by his mother and her relatives.

Beneath the sorrow for Lukeria in her illness, openly expressed and sincerely felt by most of the people, was an undercurrent of whispering as to "who will everyone recognize as our new leader if poor Lushetchka should die?" Peter evaded this question and others of lesser importance by referring to "the wisdom of Almighty God in all things." His pious manner furthered him as "Peter the Lordly" in the eyes of those already committed to him, but it made his critics the more bitter.

Leaving Slavanka in two camps of thinly veiled hostility, with the majority on his side, he returned to Lukeria in Tiflis. "I saw poor Dunia there," he told her, "and I tried to comfort her, which is the Christian way; for when we are true Christians, we must forgive everyone his sins."

For a moment, jealousy flamed in Lukeria's tired eyes, but soon they were dim with tears. "You are wonderful," she said, "living so much in the Spirit of Christ. I have always been sure I could trust you. Slava Bohu!"

The second week in December, when the snow was deep in the valleys of the Wet Mountains, and the gray wolves of Caucasia came nearer to the sheep pens, she called to her bedside Zubkoff, Mikhael Hubanoff and the elders of neighboring villages. Even Zubkoff, his mind filled with plans to succeed her, was shocked by the dark rings under her eyes.

"I will soon leave you in charge of Peter who stands before you here," she said with an effort. "For long, you know, I have had him close to me so that he would become your leader when I am gone. Slava Bohu! Praise God!"

Mikhael knelt by her bed. "It is terrible to think of you leaving us, but your soul will be happy in Heaven."

All were sorry to see Lukeria going. Even Zubkoff had tears in his eyes, though his conviction that Peter Verigin should not become ruler never left him.

Peter spoke not a word. He stood aloof, with an air of deep concern, as if he were no ordinary human being, but especially subject to God's Will in this, as in all other things.

On December 15, 1886, Lukeria died. While her maids and the older women closest to her dressed her in death clothes, women from all the villages of the Wet Mountains wailed their cries of mourning. After lying in state for three days, her body was buried in the Holy Cemetery near Horelovka, a burial ground set apart for the great and near-great of Dukhobordom.

Immediately after the funeral service, Mikhael Hubanoff—in accord with his agreement with Zubkoff—approached Peter, warning him to leave Horelovka.

"You should go now, Peter. I tell you partly as your friend, there is no use for you to stay," Mikhael said in his thin voice. "Everyone in the Orphans' Home thinks you should not be the leader, but they do not wish to harm you. Think also of Evasi Konkin, who is as you know a starshina of many villages and highly thought of. Also Vasili Strelieff, Vasili Agabonoff, Gregori Katelnikoff and other men with much influence among our people—they all oppose you."

Peter, arms folded, looked complacently into space.

"I wish you no harm," Mikhael continued, "and I do not like to talk about these things so soon after my sister's death, but you should see that I am partly your friend, and also surely it would not be the will of God that everyone should quarrel and all the brothers and sisters divide against one another. Besides," he whispered, "you know how Zumbatoff, the governor of Caucasia, is watching our affairs. Much trouble might come if he saw we could not agree among ourselves!"

"If Christ decides that I shall be the leader, then I shall be the leader," Peter began. "He will know what is best for all the brothers and sisters. Now I can say that I do not covet the gold which is in the strongbox of the Orphans' Home, and I am willing that what is Caesar's be rendered unto Caesar. Christ said, 'If cherefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?'

"Did not Christ say," Peter continued, "If he smiteth you on one cheek turn the other?" Then, that is what I shall do in the Spirit of Christ. You and your conspirators have smote me. I have turned the other cheek to you. Now I will leave you all, praying for your souls and knowing that God will guide me in what is right. Slava Bohu!"

Feeling much the martyr, Peter went to his room, resigned to leaving the Wet Mountains. He would go to his home in Slavanka. It would surely be God's will that Zubkoff be punished for this, and he, Peter, with his following, might conceivably be the instrument. While he was deep in thought, there was a knock at his door, and old Ivan Mahortoff stood there, his great back bent.

"Oh, Peter! Our Petushka! We have heard how the evil ones would make you go away. But it is not right, when with her last words she made you ruler over all Dukhobors. Petushka, Petushka, we beg you not to leave us. I have come to you to speak for many who want you to guide us in the Spirit of Christ." And the old man wept so, that tears ran into his beard.

"Dedushka, grandfather," Peter put a priestlike hand on the old one's shoulder, "God tells me, Ivan, that you speak truly. I shall stay as you suggest."

"Spasibo, spasibo. Thank you, thank you. I will take word to the true believers in Christ." The old man, nodding his gray head, smiled now through his tears.

Then in Horelovka and all the villages of the Wet Mountains, animosity grew between elders who supported Alex Zubkoff, and those who favored Peter Verigin. While adherents of both factions were dispatched to Elizevetpolsk and Kars settlements to extol the virtues of their choice, Zubkoff journeyed to Tiflis to seek assistance from officials of the Tsar.

"Peter Verigin will defy the government! Already he calls himself Christ and Tsar," Zubkoff informed Zisurman, the governor of Tiflis. "He will make much trouble for everyone."

"Did Lukeria Vasilivna leave a written will passing her property on to Peter Verigin? Did she make written attestation that he should fall heir to the property of the Orphans' Home?" asked Zisurman.

"*Nyet*. There was no written will," Zubkoff answered.

"In that case," continued the governor, "is it not possible that Lukeria was so ill she may not have been in her right mind when she orally made Peter her heir? Then it would seem to me that her property should go to her next of kin, Mikhael Hubanoff."

"That is what we also think, Your Excellency," said Zubkoff who had Mikhael Hubanoff's assurance that he was willing to be the nominal heir while he, Zubkoff, would continue as the actual administrator.

The governor assured Zubkoff that he should return to Horelovka, and everything would be properly arranged through the Russian courts.

In the Orphans' Home, men of the Hubanoff-Zubkoff faction stood guard night and day over the strongbox of gold coins. Shepherds, cattle herders and horse tenders known to be sympathetic to Peter were one by one replaced with "sensible men." Though it would have been next to impossible to move the thousands of livestock out of the Wet Mountains in the depth of winter, "it is not known what may happen," Alex warned Mikhael.

Conjecture about "who will be our new leader?" had boiled away to leave a residue of bitterness in the villages of Elizetvetsk and Kars, where the most determined men and women of both factions prepared for the journey to Horelovka to witness the "holy ceremony of the entry of Lukeria's soul into Heaven," six weeks after her death. Following the traditional ceremony at the graveside, the new ruler would be installed in office according to a custom not unlike a coronation.

On January 29, 1887, the snow of the Holy Cemetery was tramped hard by thousands of felt-lined boots, and the wintry air of the Wet Mountains seemed crisper by the tension of the people gathered in the valley. Family relationships, livestock and everyday subjects of conversation were forgotten as one Dukhobor searched the face of another . . . Is he on my side? . . . Our side? Nor did the presence of "government men" from Tiflis help to allay distrust and animosity.

"*Smotret!* Look! There stands Zumbatoff the governor," bristled Stephen to his friend, also a follower of Verigin.

"Da, yes, our brothers brought him," Semon spat in the snow. "Pravda, true, our brothers have become many times worse than Turks."

The crowd was taking shape for the ceremony, men to the right of Lukeria's grave and women to the left. Their breath, gray in the frosty air, was a visible prelude to the opening psalm, a doleful melody which droned, as if chained to earth, along the treeless valley. When its last notes had gone, the assemblage ponderously knelt down, and foreheads touched the ground in solemn reverence to Almighty God. Slowly, they rose again.

"To the memory of Lukeria, and for the peace of her soul to be received in God's Heaven this day," proclaimed an elder with stentorian voice.

"Slava Bohu!" they said as one, kneeling again and bowing low.

When they rose, old Ivan Mahortoff stood erect and stern; if his lips trembled they were hidden by his beard, as gray as Lukeria's tombstone that reached almost to his bared head.

"Brothers and sisters," he said, "let us in the true Dukhobor way bow low to demonstrate our allegiance to Peter Vasilivich Verigin, our leader in the Spirit of Christ, and in accord with the last words of our beloved Lukeria Vasilivna Kalmikova."

The followers of Peter knelt and bowed low. The serrated ranks of men and women showed that those left standing in awkward silence were against Verigin and favorable to Zubkoff and Hubanoff.

Imperial police, who had been standing with Governor Zumbatoff on a rise of land near by, pulled notebooks and pencils from the pockets of their fur coats to place a mark against the names of the Dukhobors on their knees in allegiance to Verigin.

When the Verigin followers rose from their knees to stand beside "brothers and sisters" who had not bowed, all these people were stunned with the knowledge that their sect had split in two. This numbing realization gave way to invective. Accusations were exchanged, and epithets hurled at one another.

"Robbers!" shouted a woman at a "sister" who was now a "devil," "I spit in your face, and hope God will punish you for your sins."

"Look, look, what are they doing to our Petushka," whispered a Dukhobor who edged closer to hear what Governor Zumbatoff was saying to Peter.

The governor was requesting that Peter show his passport, that important document without which anyone in Russia was liable to arrest. Peter could not find his passport in his pocket, nor was it with his papers in his room.

"I think you had better come with us to Achkalkalaki," said the governor.

Thus the "mad Dukhobors" and the "bad Dukhobors," with anger and apprehension in their hearts, watched imperial police escort Peter Vasilivich Verigin to a sleigh and disappear toward the snow-shrouded mountains. Never again to see the valley of Horelovka!

CHAPTER SIX

PETER VASILIVICH VERIGIN

IN THE GOVERNMENT TOWN of Achkalkalaki, Peter was warned of the consequences should he persist in posing to his followers "as Christ, prophet, and tsar." He said he was merely a victim of the conspirators, Hubanoff, Zubkoff, and others "who would steal the property which rightfully belongs to all the brothers and sisters. I am not a leader of those whom you call my followers. I am only one of the brothers, a humble slave of God, wishing to be left alone to live in the Spirit of Christ, as all men should."

Peter made his plea so convincingly the authorities felt unable, peremptorily, to dispatch him to Siberia. Instead, they sent him to a higher court, in Elizevetpol, capital of Elizevetpolsk province, where he was questioned by the provincial governor, Nakashidze. But Nakashidze, also unable to make up his mind, sent Verigin under police escort to his home village of Slavanka, arranging that he be kept under observation.

These warnings, questionings and police escorts served to arouse in Peter a stubborn resistance. He became further convinced that he was a martyr for a divine cause; but, cautious as he was, he could not forego a natural feeling of revenge against the Hubanoff-Zubkoff-Katelnikoff faction, and the Tsar's government.

Verigin's followers in Slavanka, with peasant sagacity, ceased openly to acclaim him their leader. When he returned to them, there was no ceremony such as had so often been accorded Lukeria. But knowing them as he did, he read easily the looks of adoration in their eyes. All this they affirmed in secret at the first opportunity, and he, in his turn, confirmed their suspicions that they must never admit his leadership to outsiders.

Neither declaring himself as the incarnation of Jesus Christ, nor denying the historic office, he hinted mysteriously of "great sacrifices we may be called upon to make in the name of Christ."

"The Lord, Peter Vasilivich, is our leader," sobbed a woman to a trusted sister, who had looked deeply into the eyes of "his mother, Anastasia, who now is truly the Mother of God."

At that moment, as if in answer to a prayer, Verigin entered the whitewashed house, startling the women with his presence.

"Slava Bohu! Slava Bohu! Our dear Petushka is here," cried Anutka, drying her eyes with her apron.

He looked down on them, laying a hand on each of their heads with that grace of movement which was to fascinate so many men and women.

"There will be much suffering in Christ," he spoke softly, but with the inevitability of a prophet. "Fear not for the future. We who obey God will be rewarded in the end."

The women ceased sobbing and kissed his hands. They felt he had given them strength to bear any persecution the government might inflict, and he in his turn felt power rising within himself; his egoism fed on their credulous faith and adoration.

"Be careful," he whispered, "to speak of me in public only as one of your brothers. When you are asked who is your leader, answer firmly, 'We have no leader. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, and no one among us is greater than another.'"

This, and similar formulas, were indelibly impressed on the minds of the children as soon as they were able to talk; and later, as well, when their own observations and reasoning might lead them to doubt the verity of these words. Thus Peter Verigin re-established the blanket of secrecy and perjury, so impenetrable in the days of Kapustin, and which Lukeria had laid aside.

Adherents of the two opposing groups of Dukhobors no longer spoke to one another. The "mad" Dukhobors removed their cattle from pastures where the cattle of the "bad" Dukhobors grazed, so that the animals would not become contaminated. Families continued to split up as the regrouping into the two factions continued. There was an exodus from village to village, resulting in certain villages being entirely inhabited by followers of Verigin, while others became wholly composed of unbelievers. The Verigin followers, hurling the epithet "No-Dukhobor" at the unbelievers, reserved for themselves the sole right to the sacred name of Dukhobor.

Nakashidze, governor of Elizavetpolsk province, who was charged by his superiors with the task of finding witnesses to give evidence against Verigin, in order that he be convicted on a specific charge of inciting insubordination, was at a loss to know what to do. No one among the "No-Dukhobors" was willing to appear in court to testify falsely or otherwise. "We are fright-

ened," they said; "we do not know what the mad ones will do if they should find out it is we who have betrayed them."

Though certain that Verigin was encouraging the Dukhobors in obstinacy and quibbling in the face of army conscription, Nakashidze was, nevertheless, unable to fix the blame on this most annoying muzhik with the body of a Greek god, the face of a Tartar noble, and the pose of a martyred Christ. To see what might come of it, the governor, on the advice of Magistrate Asak-beku, had Peter and his father arrested early in March and brought to the city of Elizetpol to live under police surveillance. The two Verigins were given permission to live with a wealthy Armenian friend, Efrem Nanas, who took them into his home, after supplying the governor with a bond against their leaving the city.

Messengers from Peter's native village came from time to time to ascertain "his word," in order that the faithful should be constantly advised how to live in the "Spirit of Christ." Several were questioned by the authorities but to no avail. Under threat of the knut, they insisted that they were interested in the Verigins "only as two of our brothers in Christ who are being persecuted."

Young Semon Osachoff of Slavanka went with his father to Elizetpol, where they visited Peter and bought a new wagon. The young man had a rooted conviction that to serve in an army was to serve the devil in murder, and his zeal was as deep as his shoulders were broad. To him Peter prophesied, "the time is coming when all true believers will refuse to be soldiers. Always we must obey Christ. Slava Bohu. But I warn you that soon I may be sent away to the farthest corner of the Tsar's empire."

Some months went by before it was Semon Osachoff's turn to refuse military service and find himself in prison, his back seared deep by the blows of the guards.

In midsummer, Peter Verigin complained of the heat in Elizetpol. "I was not born to live in a city," he appealed to Pescherov, the governor's assistant. "I would very much like to return to my home. Why is it necessary that we should be kept here against our will when we have done harm to no man?"

Pescherov, of the opinion that Verigin's influence was exaggerated by his superior, approached the governor, and the petition was granted.

Peter's return to Slavanka was viewed with anger and apprehension by the "No-Dukhobors." Least pleased was Gregori Katelnikoff, who despised Peter for his abandonment of Dunia and her son. To add injury to insult, Peter was the man most responsible for the bitter split among the people. It hurt these exceptionally gregarious people to see their sect fall apart in two bitter factions. Get rid of Peter, the leaders of the opposition thought, and the "mad brothers" might forget about him. It should have been evident to the conspirators that the wish was father to the thought; that rancorous impatience had brought forth a conclusion which any Dukhobor should have recognized as unsound. Removal from the scene had always manufactured martyrs instead of amnesia. But those opposed to Peter continued whispering to the village starosta, a tsarist government appointee since the trouble, that Peter was agitating secretly "and setting their minds against us so that we live in continual fear of our lives, not knowing what they will do to us." None of the informers could appear as witnesses against Verigin, "but the government should do something now before it is too late . . . send him away, possibly, faraway."

These promptings helped Governor Nakashidze make up his mind. Late in July, he set in motion the "wheels of justice," which carried Peter from prison to prison in that fashion peculiar to the old empire of the tsars.

On August 1, 1887, Peter, arrested in Slavanka, was taken to Elizevetpol and imprisoned. On August 15, he was moved to Tiflis prison, where Dukhobor messengers, always hovering at his heels, were not allowed to see him. At midnight, September 10, he was moved to Dushetski prison, a few more miles along the road which leads north to Moscow, and Siberia. Here some of the faithful were allowed to talk with him, but each was carefully questioned afterwards. Here the authorities also allowed him to receive money from his followers, so that he could pay his own expenses on the way to exile. Tiflis prison was reached on October 10, and Peter learned that he was to be banished "somewhere" to the far north, by "administrative order," thus obviating the need for a trial. Ivan Stepanovich Verigin, a close relative, and Emelian Dimitrivich Dimitriev, an admirer of Dukhobor ways of life, obtained permission to accompany him. His place of exile was to be the town of Shenkursk, in the province of Archangel, some 1,500 miles, as the crow flies, north of his native village of Slavanka. Well supplied with money, the

party left Tiflis with post horses. For only those exiles who could not afford transportation were required to walk in the chain gang.

Climbing steadily to a higher altitude, the snow necessitated transferring to relays of sleighs which day and night wound through the cold peaks of the Caucasian Mountains. Once they reached the northern slope of the mountains the snow was less deep and the air warmer, until at the railhead of Vladikavkaz, it was almost like summer. The police guard was in cheerful mood as the party got on the train for Moscow. It was not so bad a task escorting exiles who had money to travel properly. They would travel nine hundred and fifty miles to Moscow, three hundred miles north, still by train, to Vologoda, end of the railway line; then two hundred and fifty miles by sleigh over a corduroy road flanked by seemingly endless snow, to the fur-trading and government town of Shenkursk.

Along the wintry streets of Shenkursk to the governor's office went the sleigh, the inhabitants looking out from their windows for a glimpse of the new exile, and some going outdoors to peer at his furs, with the hope of seeing the face of this newcomer, reputed to be wealthy.

"His sleigh is coming now," shouted the butcher's boy, through a swirl of frosty air in the shop doorway.

"Shut the door, fool, do you think we burn wood in the stove to heat the whole of Arkhangelsk?" The butcher's wife scolded. "My coat," and she too hurried onto the street.

Across the street, a barkeeper with several idlers stood watching Peter's entry. "Religious or political, do you know?" he asked Efrem. Efrem didn't. The question was of importance to vendors of vodka and *vino*, for religious exiles were generally poor customers until they lost their religion, while political exiles were sometimes good ones, when they had money.

Even in Shenkursk, larger than most northern outposts, the arrival of an exile was news to everyone. Word of his coming, along with a few facts and much speculation, usually preceded these wards of the government. Verigin, muffled in his furs, was aware of the interest, but he sat facing straight ahead, as if oblivious to such unchristian curiosity.

"I suppose you know the restrictions you are under here," said the governor addressing Verigin, as the arrivals warmed their fingers around the office stove. "You know that you must not leave the town limits of Shenkursk. And you must not persuade

anyone to your own heresy. That is all. You may go now. But let me hear a good account of you." On second thought, looking up at Verigin's great shoulders, "One moment. Turn around. It will pay you to be civil to the servants of Tsar Alexander III."

Verigin thanked the governor, bowing his head no lower than necessary, and went through the door without being recalled.

He rented a house in good repair, engaged a housekeeper, and so passed the winter without hardship, reading the New Testament and occasionally condescending to instruct other exiles how a "true Christian should live." Before the snow went, the household was supplemented by Vasili Obedkoff, a particularly faithful Dukhobor from Caucasia, who brought with him a considerable sum of rubles. In the spring they rented a garden, digging and planting it themselves, also purchasing a horse and two cows.

The effect of Verigin's exile on his followers was to increase their allegiance. The most fanatical saw him as Christ in the flesh, as well as in the spirit; the moderates as Christ's representative on earth, and others, as the greatest of living men. All felt their earthly and heavenly destinies linked to him.

His banishment increased the bitterness of the Verigin adherents against the "No-Dukhobors," whom they branded as conspirators, spies, and traitors to God. Lukeria's brother, the arch-traitor, had received from the Russian courts legal title to the gold coins in the strongbox of the Orphans' Home, also to the livestock and property formerly held communally in the name of Lukeria. But Hubanoff remained true to his agreement with Zubkoff and the others, making no attempt to run off with the movable assets. The entire estate was now administered as communal property for those opposed to Verigin.

The Verigin followers further earned the displeasure of certain imperial officials, by insisting, on secret advice from Peter, that Hubanoff and his coterie had bribed the officials involved prior to Peter's arrest. Zumbatoff, governor of Caucasia, had supposedly received 10,000 rubles; the vice-governor, Deyachkov-Tarasov, 5,000 rubles; Zisurman, governor of Tiflis, a pair of purebred stallions valued at 2,000 rubles, and lesser officials had received smaller amounts in cash and livestock. What hurt the Verigin followers was the gnawing thought that their money and property had been used to banish their leader.

The two years from 1888 to 1890 saw little change among the people in Caucasia. Dukhobors who submitted to army conscription with more than ordinary reluctance continued to suffer harsh

treatment, not a few finding themselves in dark prisons, or under relentless "discipline" in penal battalions. Intermittent, but intrepid messengers traversed the breadth of Russia to visit their ruler and carry his latest word back to the faithful. For the most part the messengers, at this time, were able to obtain passports. In some instances these visits were subtly encouraged by the imperial government in the expectation that prison cells and adroit questioning might bring forth information of value. But it did not. The messengers persisted in their stock answers through threats, punishment, or cajolery. To the question put time and time again, "Who is your leader?" the answer came unfalteringly: "We have no leader, none among us is greater than another. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ."

"Who, then, is Peter Verigin?"

"He is one of our poor brothers exiled to the harsh north for his Christian faith."

"What did he tell you?"

"He told us to obey Christ and live in the Christian way," and with blue eyes looking at his interrogator, the Dukhobor would quote quiet texts from the New Testament.

Verigin sent lengthy quotations from the New Testament in letters addressed to members of his family in Caucasia. These letters were released by the recipients to be read aloud by one or two literate individuals for the benefit of the mass who listened expectantly for "hidden meanings" and parables. For days following the arrival of a letter the faithful variously maintained that "Petushka meant us to understand this. . . ." "Nyet, he meant instead . . ." Elders were asked to shed the light of their wisdom on this and that "hidden meaning."

Verigin, fond of good horses, let his followers know that those in Shenkursk were not the spirited animals raised by the Dukhobors. So after much discussion as to what horse to send and who should take it, it was decided to dispatch a dark bay stallion, valued at 500 rubles, and Ivan, Peter's brother, to take the horse to Shenkursk.

In Shenkursk Ivan found Peter in good health and discussing religion and philosophy with other exiles, Stundists, Baptists, Tolstoyans, and occasionally engaging in argument with revolutionaries who spoke of the teachings of a man called Karl Marx. A particular friend of Peter's was Nikolai Ivanovich Voronen, banished for his political views. Voronen's dream of political action, which would replace the reigning bureaucracy with gov-

ernment by the people, did not appeal to Peter. The people, Peter thought, were not equipped for such responsibilities, were not sufficiently Christian, were not "true Dukhobors." The solution was not in changing the government, but in the people learning to become Dukhobors, "in the Spirit of Christ, and when that day comes governments will be unnecessary to brotherhood, just as now they are necessary to evil." Despite these disagreements, Peter, Voronen, and all the exiles of Shenkursk shared a decided antipathy toward the government which held them in exile. Of all the ideas and theories with which that northern outpost was pregnant, those of Leo Tolstoy, the count who gave much of his own land to the peasants, appealed most to Verigin. Tolstoy's philosophies reached Verigin secondhand from the mouths of other exiles, and from books published by Posrednik, an enterprising firm issuing publications especially designed to disseminate the views of this powerful writer who was stirring the heart of Russia.

The governor of Shenkursk, an admirer of the great in St. Petersburg, was not pleased with "this peasant, Verigin, who has much more money to spend than he should have, and whose house is a den of agitation." St. Petersburg was so informed, and an order came in the summer of 1890 for Peter's removal eight hundred miles farther north and west to Kola (Murmansk), Lapland. He bought his own ticket, left hurriedly on the mail coach to the White Sea port of Archangel (Arkhangelsk), and from there sailed on a government ship into the Arctic Ocean to the northernmost tip of continental Russia in Europe.

Varvara, Peter's sister, who had come to visit him shortly before, was thus left in Shenkursk, while her husband Ivan Konkin, and her brother, Vasili, were in St. Petersburg en route to Shenkursk. Later, all three managed to obtain permission to go to Kola.

The chief of police in Kola, Vasili Lukianovich, welcomed Peter as a guest. In his younger days he had been in Caucasia, when Lukeria Kalmikova was known to imperial officials for her hospitality and good looks. Here was someone new to talk with, someone to revive memories of the flower-scented meadows of Caucasia, memories which years and the long winter nights of ice-bound Kola had cooled, but not obliterated. Besides, Peter had brought a good horse with him. And plenty of rubles! And what a fine-looking man he was!

Thus, throughout his two years in Kola, Peter enjoyed more

freedom than at any time before during his exile. His relatives, friends, and followers were welcome, and no difficulty was placed in the way of his messenger service, which, on a miniature scale, put the Tsar's secret police to shame. Besides learning to drive reindeer Peter pursued his studies of redemptionist theories.

Whether word of the leniency accorded him by the chief of police reached the ears of higher authorities, or whether Peter petitioned the authorities for a move south—he did not like the long winter darkness—is not disclosed in available records. But in 1892 an order was received at Kola that he be returned to Shenkursk.

In Shenkursk he formed a Dukhobor household, an Orphans' Home in exile. Here he reigned supreme amidst a well-regulated routine. Besides a cook, he engaged two orphan girls and two boys to look after the horses and cows. The establishment, now requiring two houses, consisted of the Dukhobors, Obedkoff, Rebin, Mahortoff, Tsibilkin, Tejebokoff, and their wives, Gregori Verigin, and his wife. Tejebokoff, Rebin, Matortoff and Tsibilkin, together with the wives of the latter three, who had originally been exiled to Olenetski province, had been granted permission to move to Shenkursk "so that the exiled brothers and sisters be allowed to live together in one peaceful family." That fall, Gregori Verigin, Peter's brother, had arrived from Caucasia, bringing with him Tejebokoff's wife.

This entire household rose in good time each morning and carried out a prearranged routine. While the hired help attended to the livestock and the making of breakfast, Peter and his apostles walked for one to two hours. This exercise, Peter advised, was necessary for a healthy body and a good spirit. Each morning, gray-haired old Mahortoff fed his flock of twenty geese, raised only as pets; for Peter, consciously or unconsciously, absorbing the views of Tolstoy, had inaugurated a strictly vegetarian diet. Everyone adhered to it with the exception of Voronen, the political exile, and his wife. They ate their meals at a separate table. After breakfast, Peter busied himself with wood carving in a room especially reserved for this work.

In the afternoon he pondered over the New Testament and the theories of Tolstoy, his own imagination bridging gaps which appeared to him to exist between the two. His advice to his followers, however, was given in the name of Christ—not Tolstoy. Thus it was not until years later than one of the most astounding puzzles of Dukhobor history was laid bare.

After supper, throughout the long winter evenings, everyone congregated to hear religious and philosophical discussions led by Peter sitting like a prophet at the head of the table, the yellow light from the oil lamp above seeming to cast a halo around his head. The eternal questions: What to do? How to live? Is this right? Is that wrong? Peter could ask these questions without a threat to his status of infallibility. "He does not have to ask us. He knows the answers," old Mahortoff would say to Rebin afterwards. "It is to test our knowledge of the Christian way, that he asks us." "Da, da, that is true," Rebin would agree.

"Is it right," Peter asked one night, "that we should have so much good food to eat, when many little children in Shenkursk are hungry? Should we not always divide what we have with the poor, especially the hungry children?"

Everyone agreed, the political exile, in his enthusiasm so far forgetting himself as to urge "revolution as sweeping as the length and breadth of Russia, which, ousting the tsars forever from their thrones, would form a government out of true representatives of the workers and peasants, which would—"

Verigin's disapproving, almost sneering face at this breach of etiquette, which was reflected in the stolid faces of the Dukhobors around the table, cut short Voronen's impassioned discourse.

"Do you yet not know," Verigin chastised him, "that *all* governments are both bad and unnecessary?"

Voronen might have asked Peter if his wholesale condemnation of governments included the Dukhobor theocracy. He did not, perhaps because he knew he and his wife could not live independently of the Dukhobor menage.

Had Verigin, in his turn, been frank by nature, he might have admitted that he, like a sponge, was absorbing the more recent philosophy of Tolstoy and wringing it out on his followers' heads; heads impervious to ideas other than those emanating from Verigin. At this stage of his life, Peter Verigin practiced much of what he preached. When he accepted the theory "it is wrong to kill animals for food, because it is wrong to take life, and therefore only vegetables and fruits should constitute the diet of humans," he abandoned meat for a vegetarian table.

When all agreed that food should be given to the ill-fed children of Shenkursk, Peter announced his Christian plan to alleviate the condition. Concerning the division of wealth and labor, he proposed regularly to give away a proportion of the money continually arriving from Caucasia, to spend more time in the gar-

den, and to take the hired help "with us when we go with the horses for sleigh rides on Sunday. Slava Bohu."

This evening's discussion was especially happy, and everyone, including Voronen, went to bed with a warm heart and a feeling of great things to come.

That week saw the beginning of a series of biweekly free dinners for the underfed children of the town. Substantial meals they were too, steaming bowls of vegetables cooked in a way to take anyone's fancy. All the cabbage and potatoes that a boy of twelve or a girl of fourteen could eat. They spread the news around the town, these twenty children, seven years old and up: "We had all we could eat . . . *all* we could eat, and I didn't stop eating until I felt like it . . . and *frukt* which looks like red meat in a green hide, which had black seeds in it, bigger than sunflower seeds . . . such a taste like sugar . . . melts in your mouth like snow; *arbus*, the tall man with the beard called it . . . a very good man . . ." For the first time in their lives they had seen and eaten watermelon and cantaloupe, which Peter had grown in his own hotbeds. Peter Vasilivich himself presided at the table, around which everyone stood while he spoke a psalm. He told of the benefits of eating vegetables, and that it was wrong to eat meat because it was wrong to kill animals.

The free dinners, which in a short time had drawn a guest list of forty children, far from pleased the local priests of the Russian Orthodox Church. The outcome was that the clergy reported Peter for proselytizing and contaminating the minds of little children, after luring them into his house by food.

Summoned before the town's temporal and spiritual authorities, Peter pleaded not guilty. He had not tried to persuade the children away from any religion. He had fed them because they were hungry. Would Christ have done otherwise? Would Christ have him do otherwise? Did not Christ say, "Give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven?" And was not Christ always considerate of children who were hungry? But the priests did not like Verigin any better for a poise which they were unable to upset, and his artfully smooth manner of passing back to them the very Scriptures upon which the Russian Orthodox Church professed to stand. A crafty priest, who had so far been able to keep his temper, now adopted the method of interrogation so effectively used by Peter:

"Is it true," began the priest looking at Peter through narrowing eyelids, "that you have been trying to discredit the church by

falsely representing and twisting the teachings of Christ? Answer me that."

The priest had in mind four poor families in Shenkursk who had recently stopped going to church.

"I did not twist the teachings of Christ," Peter replied with a growing feeling that he could get the better of the cleric. "How is it possible to distort that which is God's? It is not possible for a man to do such things. That is why I would not accuse *you* of doing it."

Blood rose around the priest's ears, pulsing red there.

"Be careful what you say, I warn you. You ignorant muzhik. . . . You who are here in exile because you incite others to disobey the Tsar, the defender of God's faith on earth. It was only his Christian tolerance which allowed you to come here instead of treating you to the prison and the knut you deserve."

As the priest struggled with his temper, Verigin's feeling of calm and sainthood increased. Finally the priest mastered his wrath and professed compassion for Peter's ignorance. But the authorities saw to it that a clerk from the governor's office sat at the table with the hungry children of Shenkursk "to make certain their minds would not be contaminated by heresy."

CHAPTER SEVEN

SIBERIA

PETER'S PHILOSOPHIZING, which resulted in the new way of life for his immediate Dukhoboria, was not restricted to the little group of exiles in Shenkursk. To make certain his faithful in Caucasia should share in the benefits of his redemptionist plans, he instructed the people, through his secret messengers, how they were to live. Thus, some 10,000 followers set about the task of reorganizing their mass economy, and of adjusting their personal habits to fit the commands of their ruler.

The exact year in which the Dukhobors began to change their mode of living is not available because of the secrecy surrounding the venture. No written records were made lest they fall into the hands of imperial authorities. Whether Peter's initial instructions reached Caucasia, in 1892, or 1893, was many years later a subject for argument among the Dukhobors. However, it was agreed that Peter's first instructions concerned a redistribution of material wealth as a means to introducing Christian equality.

Peter's "advice" was variously interpreted in different provinces and villages, varying in accord with the understanding and zeal of local elders. In the Wet Mountains village of Orlovka, where all the inhabitants were followers of Verigin since the "No-Dukhobors" had taken exclusive possession of Horelovka, Verigin's message was for the most part received with joy. The villagers put about one half their ready money into a general fund which soon attained the sum of \$20,000. All debts were canceled. The fund, administered by a committee of elders, was for the use of those in need, who might apply for gifts of money. Besides, wealthier Dukhobors made individual gifts of livestock and farm implements to their brothers less well equipped.

In some villages of Kars province, the order was carried out in more thoroughgoing fashion, villagers bringing all they possessed to be divided. There were some who held back a few thousand rubles pretending that they had contributed their last kopek. Horses, cows, sheep, ducks, geese and hens were herded into common enclosures. The women brought articles of clothing, men their extra pairs of boots, then everything was distributed,

all receiving an equal share. The division was entered into amidst religious fervor, many "Slava Bohus," and praises for Peter Vasilivich.

It was not until the enthusiasm had subsided, and the villagers were settled down again to mundane routine, that catty remarks came out such as: "You are wearing *my* petticoat. Don't forget that *you* would not have such a nice rug hanging on your wall, if *I* had not been such a good Christian and taken it to the communal center." Whereupon the woman so reminded would reply to her benefactor: "Petushka told you to give those things. What else could you do? He also meant that I should have them. So I have taken them, and I do not owe *you* anything, you old *kapha*." Some kulak-minded men suffered regrets that they had "given away good horses to lazy fellows who will never have anything because they do not know how to care for anything." Such doubts, however, did not assail the majority, or even the wealthiest, who felt abounding joy and had great faith that they had taken a step nearer salvation. Moreover, Petushka promised further advice of an equally soul-cleansing nature in the very near future.

The wholesale cancelation of debts is the more interesting in contrast with the attitude immediately prior to Peter's revelation. Then, a debtor who could not meet his obligation would get down on his knees and plead with his creditor: "Do not disgrace me and my family by canceling the debt I owe you." (Meanwhile the creditor would threaten to wipe out the amount which was marked in chalk above the stove.) "I promise you, I will soon be able to pay." Whereupon the creditor, if he were not a "hard man," would leave the bookkeeping entry intact, and allow his debtor a chance to redeem himself. After Peter's advice, "All debts are wiped out in our village," was repeated with pride. Had Peter Verigin advised that all debtors immediately pay their debts or be driven from the flock, it is likely that the creditors would have acted in this direction as readily as they did in the opposite.

Peter next advised his followers that they discontinue drinking vodka and wine. So thoroughly was this enactment carried out, that kegs of liquor were opened, and their contents allowed to flow onto the ground. In a few villages, where the elders had a deep-seated business sense, it was decided to sell the vodka and vino to Turks and Armenians and use the money for "Christian purposes."

Then Peter advised against the use of tobacco. With some

trepidation the men burned their pipes and cigarettes, and Wet Mountain women discarded their tobacco pouches, which they had long kept beneath their aprons. One or two haystacks went up in smoke as a result of inveterate smokers enjoying a surreptitious puff, and there were signs of restlessness and irritability around the fireside on evenings. A few weak brothers deserted the flock to join the "No-Dukhobors."

The next order, to cease eating meat, seriously affected the economy of the people. Meat, especially mutton, was an important item in the diet of the Wet Mountain people, who, because of the high altitude and early frosts, were never sure of a grain crop other than barley. However, the Verigin followers everywhere instituted vegetarianism; mutton and beef disappeared from their tables, and barley soup became fashionable in the highlands. Though Peter had said it was wrong to kill animals and therefore wrong to eat meat, he had said nothing about it being wrong to raise sheep and cattle for the outside market. Thus the Dukhobors continued selling livestock to "unchristian butchers," using the money to buy vegetables and fruits. A few more weak brothers left the flock, forming another group in between the "mad" Dukhobors and the "bad" ones.

It seems that November 4, 1894, was the day on which meat was removed from the diet.

Barely had Verigin's followers begun to accustom themselves to vegetarianism, than he advised them all, married or single, "to cease copulation during your time of tribulation." On receiving this order, a few hundred more left the fold, while the faithful struggled to abstain from sexual intimacy. The birth rate fell to a minimum, and women giving birth to children at any time after a nine-month period immediately following institution of the advice, were ostracized as sinners. Women known for their ability to cause abortion were sought in secret by the sinful not wishing to leave the flock. Marriages became unnecessary.

In fairness to Peter Verigin, it should be stated that he lived in accord with the instructions he gave his followers. It is unlikely, however, that he realized the vast difference between his putting certain conclusions into practice, and of passing on these conclusions, virtually in the form of commands, to people who had given them little, if any, individual thought. The powerful philosophizing of Tolstoy helped Verigin to decide how to live his life, and he promptly decided for his followers who, unlike himself, were not living in semimonastic isolation.

Amid satisfaction, mingled with bolder dreams for the salvation of his followers, Verigin received reports from Caucasia that the faithful had done well. But by no means had they accomplished everything. Greater things were to be done in the name of Christ, probably to be followed by persecution more severe than any suffered before. As if to forecast things to come, and set example, he refused to swear oath of allegiance in 1894 to the new tsar, Nikolai II. "Oaths are both unnecessary and wrong," he said, "and I, as one of God's humble servants on earth, cannot hold allegiance to anyone but Him." Threatened with corporeal punishment by the authorities in Shenkursk, he replied: "It is not my concern that the government continually disobeys the word of God by persecuting Christians. If you should strike me, I can only obey Christ and turn the other cheek."

Exasperated at Verigin's impertinence, knowing only too well that the people of the town were being influenced by this man who fed hungry children and gave money to the poor, the governor recommended that he be removed to a place where his persistent insubordination would have less opportunity to affect the minds of Tsar Nikolai's loyal subjects. Verigin anticipated his transfer by dispatching Vasili Obedkoff to Caucasia, with instructions that he return with two trusted messengers "before it is too late."

When rumors reached the faithful that Peter was on his way to Siberia, via Moscow, great excitement prevailed. They were unable to obtain passports for the messengers. Vasili Vereschagin, using his influence, managed a passport for himself and Vasili Verigin, Peter's brother. With Obedkoff they set out for Moscow. Finding no trace of Peter there, they went on to Vologoda, and finally to Shenkursk, where they found their leader expecting any day to be sent away.

While a bitter November wind whirled snow along the stark streets of Shenkursk, and howled through the night to rattle the windows of Peter's residence, he sat at the head of the table in the yellow light of the great oil lamp. Bearded face cupped in one hand, embroidered silk clad elbow resting on the table, he revealed his plan "in the Spirit of Christ" to the three Vasilis.

"We have already decided not to take the life of even the smallest bird. The time is coming when all true Dukhobors must show the world it is wrong to own a weapon of any kind, wrong to be in an army. It will be right for Dukhobors to refuse military service of any kind."

There was awed and tense silence as they waited for him to go on.

"So my brothers, I truly believe that on Peter's Day, next summer, we will all, wherever we may be, gather our weapons together and burn them. Every rifle, every sword, scimitar and long knife which a Dukhobor owns, he must destroy in great fires which the brothers will prepare next June 29. Then every young man who is on the army reserve list will turn in his reservist papers to the government. That is my advice. If you take it, you must remember that Christ said, 'You may destroy my body but not my soul.'"

"Such a step," ventured Vasili Veraschagin, "will surely bring much suffering upon us all."

"Oh, you of little faith, think not of your bodies when obedience to God will save your souls. Does it matter if we suffer, if we die? Does not Christ say that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit? Pravda, but I see there are some among us who must be born again."

Tears came in Veraschagin's eyes as he asked forgiveness for the weakness and doubt within himself. With Vasili Verigin, he promised never to falter while these things were being brought about.

Verigin impressed those who would be the messengers with the need for absolute secrecy. None but a few trusted elders were to be told until next summer, while the mass of the people were to know nothing until the afternoon of the day set for the burning of the guns.

On a cold gray morning, November 5, 1894, Peter Verigin left Shenkursk, en route to Siberia. Refusing to ride in the sleigh with the free Dukhobors who were accompanying him as far as Moscow on their way back to Caucasia, he chose to walk through the snow with the moneyless prisoners of the chain.

Peter's mode of travel made for a slow journey along the two hundred and fifty miles to the railway at Vologoda. Inside the bare walls of prison stations, the prisoners cut wood for the stoves on which they prepared their scanty meals. At night, stretching out on the floor, they slept, the sweat of those by the stove mixing with exhausted air from a hundred throats, until by morning there was a heavy frowziness which seemed to drug even the hunched form that shivered in its sleep by the frosty crack beneath the door. At some of the shelters the chain was held over for two or three days until more prisoners arrived, or until a

storm abated. Thus it was almost December when they reached Vologoda. Peter's feet were blistered, calloused and frostbitten. Twice along the journey he had allowed his blisters to be drained, but steadfastly he had refused to ride in a sleigh with the "free brothers." After five days in the overcrowded prison at Vologoda, the train came, and the men and women of the chain were herded into it like livestock. At Yaroslav, where the railway crosses the Volga, they spent four days in prison; then in the train again and south to Moscow. As this was before the building of the Trans-Siberian Railway, the prisoners were taken by way of Moscow, where Peter was put into an underground cell—"beautified with the blood of crushed parasites," he described it.

Tolstoy, who was in Moscow, and who had heard of the Dukhobors practicing vegetarianism, equality of wealth, and non-violence, learned of the arrival of several peasants said to be en route to Siberian exile. Learning that one was in Buturski Prison, he asked permission to visit him. Tolstoy sent Paul Ivanovich Birukov, one of his followers, to find the Dukhobors who were not imprisoned. The authorities had no intention of allowing Tolstoy to see Verigin, whom they suspected was a disturbing factor among the Dukhobors, just as Tolstoy was a disturbing influence among the great mass of the Russian people. But they could not afford bluntly to refuse a request from a man, so highly regarded that even tsars feared to touch him. However, they did not prevent his meeting Veraschagin, Vasili Verigin and Obedkoff, and he eagerly questioned them concerning their way of life and praised them for practicing the "Christian anarchy" so dear to his own heart. With that ease which was second nature to them, the three Dukhobors led Tolstoy to believe that their sect had no leader, none among them was greater than another; they, individually and collectively, as a result of their own reasoning and inner voice had decided to practice the very things which Tolstoy, in this phase of his life, advocated so ardently.

Tolstoy, in his enthusiasm, was unaware—and the Dukhobors were careful not to inform him—that Peter Verigin, "suffering persecution in Buturski Prison," was the theocratic ruler who had impressed the sect with Tolstoy's teaching. He did not even know Peter Verigin was acquainted with his theories.

"The Dukhobors are a most remarkable people," he declared afterwards. "They work with their hands, exploiting no one, producing more than they consume. They reject authority of both church and state, acknowledge no human authority, yet live to-

gether peacefully in their community with no guidance other than their own reason and conscience. Among these dignified, confident, yet illiterate peasants is the germination of that seed sown by Christ himself eighteen hundred years ago."

Tolstoy who had witnessed the painful failure of Tolstoy colonies, Tolstoy with his faith in the peasant and ardent desire for quick steps along the highway to truth and salvation, had stumbled upon a Christian community which was the flesh and blood exemplification of his own teachings, which he himself frankly admitted he was far from able to attain in entirety.

Now he felt he must see the other Dubhobor, Peter Verigin, who was to be sent to Siberia. He was informed by the authorities he might see Verigin at nine o'clock in the evening, before the train left for the Urals. He waited at the station until eleven o'clock, and still there was no sign of Verigin. Just before midnight Peter was hurried from the prison to the waiting train. Tolstoy had left to inquire. The bell clanged, sparks flew from the bowl-like engine funnel, the train moved on frosty rails toward the Ural Mountains. Tolstoy had been outwitted.

While Verigin, with Obedkoff who was always with him, went on to Siberia, Vasili Verigin and Veraschagin traveled south to take Peter's greeting to the Dukhobors and prepare for the great day next summer when the weapons would be burned.

At Cheliabinsk, 1,500 miles east of Moscow, guards and officials were rougher with the exiles. When Peter refused to take down his trousers for a medical examination, because there were women present, the doctor ordered two soldiers to strip him. At Tiumen, two hundred miles farther northeast, prison authorities carried on a petty graft by selling luxuries to those of the prisoners who had money. Peter, who was at this time traveling by post horses, overtook prison chains trudging through the snow on foot—men and women, old and young, footsore and cold, some weak with hunger, others unwell—dark-gray patches of humanity moving slowly northward over the endless snow.

He reached Tobolsk early in February and found the new three-story prison colder, the lavatory pails leaking and making life unbearable for the prisoners on the lower floors. Through Samarovak to Berezov. From Berezov, by reindeer now, over the treeless frozen tundra to Obdorsk. Almost four months since he and Vasili Obedkoff left Shenkursk, and they had traveled nearly 3,000 miles.

Obdorsk, the government fur-trade and fishing outpost, where

the River Ob finds the Arctic Ocean. It was two years since a "rich exile" had come to Obdorsk. The village was astir with news and rumors which had preceded the newcomers "who have given ruble tips along the way." Dimitri, a political exile, was so anxious for the sight of a new face and news of the outside world, that it was with difficulty he restrained himself from joining the gaping crowd on the village street. "What sort of a man is this new one who has been sent to cool his zeal in the sixty below zero of Obdorsk?" thought Dimitri, standing impatiently at his window, cursing aloud "this God-forsaken country" where he must stay against his will.

Verigin and Obedkoff got out of their sleigh at the posthouse, ignoring the villagers who came closer to peer at them. After reporting to the authorities, Peter looked for a house to rent. He was directed to a political exile, Sergei, who might give him information.

Dimitri, unable to stay indoors any longer, went to Sergei's house and found his friend and the new exile already in an argument, about nonviolence.

Sergei, skin stretched like parchment across his lean face, blowing clouds of smoke from his cigarette, pacing the floor like a pendulum, said, "I tell you, Verigin, it is nonsense! This idea of nonviolence! It has no basis in fact; it is a chimera of the mind; it is misleading people into thinking they might gain something by turning the other cheek . . . the followers of this creed are forever contradicting themselves, confusing themselves and others . . . *Chepuha*. Nonsense."

Sergei was greatly agitated by this healthy man, who should know better than to dream Tolstoyan dreams when there was so much to be done. "Action," he said getting up again from his paper-strewn table. "Action is what we need to change society." His legs clad in deerskin moccasins moved back and forth restlessly.

Sergei now gave Peter little opportunity for rebuttal. Peter sat there, quietly, as if personifying passive resistance, his gray eyes beneath their long lashes following Sergei, his black beard hiding a smile of irony. He tried asking a few questions, but his way of baiting had no effect on impatient Sergei, starved for someone fresh on whom to loose his zeal for revolution. Peter got up. He was tired, he said. He had had a long journey. He must go now and make arrangements for the house he would rent. Yes, he would return some evening.

The door closed behind him. There was silence for a moment, Sergei sitting with his forehead in his hand.

"Well," said Dimitri, "he certainly exemplifies his theory of nonviolence. He is husky enough to have picked you up with one hand and thrown you through the door. One could feel his physical strength in the air."

"He is not servile, seems to be sure of himself," admitted Sergei, "sort of sublime superiority, almost patronizing."

Peters' bearing had further disturbed the two friends. His nonviolence—could there be something in it? But how could such an idea possibly change things for humanity? Political action was necessary.

Peter rented one of the best houses in Obdorsk, known as "Governor's Quarters," complete with a housekeeper who was as respectable as she was talkative. For some reason, he sent Vasili Obedkoff back to Caucasia.

Sergei and Dimitri came often, the discussions lasting far into the night, Verigin talking with a freedom and a rationalization of argument which he had not shown in the Shenkursk Dukhoboria. He now openly spoke of Tolstoy's philosophy, admitting this influence, and denouncing technical progress, together with machinery, as unnecessary for the best life.

"Our dilemma concerning him," wrote Dimitri in his diary, "was his complete rejection of education, and of earning one's living by using the mind. He prefers physical labor, of course. Then he goes so far as to reject simple literacy. In his method of debating, he shows a quick brain. He might have been a successful lawyer, taking cases which specially interested him. He knows how to defend his own beliefs, even though he expands them on and on, apparently oblivious to the fact that he moves into the realm of the absurd. . . . He knows the New Testament almost by memory, it being his favorite book. Next to it are Tolstoy's books; after that, Nekrasov; also Farar's two books: *For the Intelligentsia* and *For the People*. He receives two periodicals, *Nadelu* (*The Week*), and *Novoslovo* (*The New Word*)."

Sergei and Dimitri had reason to believe that the discussions in Peter's house were reaching the ears of the governor. It must be through Peter's housekeeper, "the local press" of Obdorsk, who would go to extremes to get information . . . listening, peeping . . . this gossipy housekeeper who could not help but run to the authorities . . ."

So Peter gave up his small mansion and rented a native-built

hut by the edge of the village. Here he lived alone, spending much of his time at woodcraft.

Then came spring. The ice went out of the Ob, and rafts of logs for next winter's fuel floated into Obdorsk. The first steamboat arrived with wheat, flour, mail, packages of food and clothes, and the whole village went down to meet the boat. The liquor vendors who had been so short of vodka that customers had to wait three, or four days for their pails to be filled, again did brisk trading. Soon sleigh dogs slept in the sun of the streets, and tough grass showed green on the brown of the tundra.

Peter built a hotbed and planted cucumbers, a procedure which greatly interested the villagers. He helped a crippled man move bricks. He looked for opportunities to help people, the poor especially, by physical labor, and distributed many silver coins and some paper rubles. To a fellow who had asked him for money and then taken it to the liquor store, Peter gave a temperance sermon when the man again came for money. But after the lecture he gave him some silver.

"The villagers exploit his philanthropy," wrote Dimitri in his diary. "For some reason he kept a collection of daggers with silver-inlaid handles, expensive revolvers, costly rugs and extra clothes. When one day we teased him about these things not being consistent with his beliefs, he gave most of them away to people around the village."

Peter's increased reading of books and wider contact with the other exiles, was reflected in an extended vocabulary evident in his letters. Now and then he introduced the "We" of tsars, popes and editorial writers, but his letters throughout show a studied evasion of direct reference to the plans he sent to his followers by secret messengers. All his mail was, of course, opened and read by the authorities.

To the Dukhobors in Caucasia, he wrote on May 30, 1895:

To the most beloved brethren and sisters in spirit, who wish to live according to the commandments of Almighty God and Jesus Christ. May happiness and peace be throughout your life.

Myself through the kindness of Almighty God am well and in a happy state, for which I thank and praise our Heavenly Father. Your letter postmarked 4th March, I received only on May 2. I thank you most sincerely for your good wishes on the Holy Easter. In verity Christ has Risen. I received your letter later, because here from Tobolsk the winter roads began to spoil about 15th March. The letter languished somewhere; and when the rivers opened, it was delivered

to me; I already wrote to you that I was settled here in Obdorsk, instead of Berezov. We wrote last fall to the brothers in Elizavetpolsk concerning immigration, and according to *our* opinion it is possible to live there, because the soil is very fertile for vegetables—everything grows. We could have formed a small colony, and if only peace and harmony became universal, we could live in the glory of God. About the saving of souls, that depends not on place or location or people, but for each to oneself. The most important thing in this matter, my most beloved brothers and sisters, is not to take into account or pay any attention to the lusts of the flesh of people who are not yet one with us, but to raise oneself to the highest possible level if we understand the truth, and if not, with a meek heart appeal to the Almighty God and beg His aid. Concerning the separation, let not your hearts hurry you towards that act. Because if other people could make it possible that the whole world could exist like one large family, and that Almighty God Himself desires; and in order to reach heavenly paradise, that condition can be compared to placing a very tall ladder and the greatest urge of the people would be to directly reach the summit, some would be able to achieve this through the blessing of the Almighty as well as their desire to attain the summit; others are left in the middle, a third may even be left on the ground at the base of the ladder.

Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, we must know not only people wishing to climb to the summit so that they could enjoy the surrounding world. Seeing that everything on this earth is created by the Almighty God, therefore, it is impossible to hate anything except evil actions; and to be able to discover for ourselves what is right and what is evil, we have been given intuition and reason, so we must carefully and strictly look to our tasks. Again wishing you and all brothers and sisters spiritual and material happiness and welfare.

Your loving brother in the Spirit of Christ.

PETER.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BURNING OF THE GUNS

"... TO DISCOVER FOR ourselves what is right and what is evil, we have been given intuition and reason . . ." If there is any truth in the world, surely those lines, which Verigin took from Tolstoy and sent as his own to his followers, are true.

If the results of human struggling through the ages are not as futile as they sometimes seem; if life is more than a colossal practical joke exposed in that bizarre motion picture called history, that record of striving toward hope and stumbling into despair, that grotesquerie of seeming progress and inevitable catastrophe—if there is a way out to happiness, surely it might be by each individual developing his reason and intuition.

To his followers, Peter Verigin was the substitute for "intuition and reason." At his order they ceased now to bow politely to imperial officials. With contemptuous smiles and provoking manner, they explained that they could not pay taxes, nor supply horses for the governor's conveyance, nor carry out any of the decrees of the authorities, "because we are orthodox Christians governed by God Himself."

Vasili Verigin, Peter's brother, who with the other messengers had talked with Tolstoy in Moscow, was arrested as an agitator and put in solitary confinement in Mehetski prison, Tiflis. Several more Dukhobors were arrested, some of whom were sent to penal battalions for refusing military service.

Only a few trusted elders knew what was to take place on June 29, but all were aware "of something great to happen," on that day. Everywhere, evangelical excitement was evident. Toward the "No-Dukhobors," the "bad brothers," the attitude of the faithful became one of boastful superiority. "We are going to show you what we are made of; and we will astonish you all," they said. And abstinence from normal sexual relations caused in the veins of the Verigin followers a defiant energy which goaded yet further their religious zeal.

The "No-Dukhobors," in fear of "what the 'mad ones' will do to us," carried a stream of rumors to the authorities, who became more perturbed.

Nakashidze, governor of Tiflis, received reports that the "mad Dukhobors" intended to attack Horelovka, capture the Orphans' Home and take back the property which had been awarded to Lukeria's brother. The governor himself decided to visit the Wet Mountains to ascertain what was going on. In the government town of Achalkalaki, he met with representatives of those who were suspicious of their "mad brothers," but none of the faithful appeared. When twenty of them were brought against their will they protested at being "taken captive," insisting they were "orthodox Christians governed by God Himself. . . . We cannot submit to pagan authorities sunk in falsehood and deception, nor can we submit to your laws, because we have our own faith, which forbids us to accept any kind of government service. We can pay no taxes, cannot swear allegiance to an earthly tsar, cannot supply recruits, nor carry out the decrees of local authorities."

"Who is your leader, the one who caused you to decide all these things?" asked the governor.

"We have no leader, each one of us decides for himself," was the reply. "It is the Christian way. We recognize no authority but God's."

One of the young men, personally known to the governor, was detained for further questioning after the rest had been dismissed. "Do you think," the governor asked, "that you are behaving wisely and profitably?"

"Who cares now about what is wise and profitable?" the lad replied. "There is no question of shame in it. We are following our fate, and we are going to death if necessary. You see that everything has become tangled and confused; we ourselves do not know how it all come about or what will come of it."

Urged on by the vindictive and fearful who had broken away from the fold, Governor Nakashidze dispatched soldiers to the Wet Mountains. There, in the vicinity of Horelovka, on the evening of June 28, 1895, three hundred Cossacks and several companies of foot soldiers were encamped to protect the lives and property of those not belonging to the "mad brothers." While the main body of Cossacks, their horses saddled, sang about their camp fires, scouts watched the villages for what was thought might develop into an armed uprising of the insubordinate Dukhobors.

By now, the elders in the three provinces had passed on the word to the mass of the Verigin followers that they must collect their rifles, swords and scimitars, and bring all their weapons to

certain houses in each village. With such secrecy were these preparations made, in the darkness, that the government scouts surmised the movement to be one of warlike mobilization, and their conjectures were readily affirmed by the feverish imaginings of the "No-Dukhobors."

Away to the south in Elizetvetsk settlement, where the strife between the two factions was less bitter, only fifty Cossacks waited in readiness. Early in the afternoon the elders of the Verigin followers here had disclosed to a number of the most trusted that there would be a ceremony somewhere, soon after midnight, and that much firewood would be required. That is all they knew when they obediently loaded their wagons with firewood. The loaded wagons stood horseless in the villages as the sun went down, elders hinting that the mysterious ceremony would be held first at one place and then another. These rumors were carried, as was the intent, to Colonel Seratov, in command of the Cossacks. Thus while the Cossacks followed many false trails, the elders gave orders that the teamsters hitch their horses to the wagons and haul the firewood to the bolshoi meadow by Slavanka, where Peter's Day celebrations had always been held. As the huge pyre was being built, others came with weapons gathered from every village of the faithful in Elizetvetsk province.

With quick stealth, word spread among the villagers that as soon as they should see a red glare in the sky, they should all go to the fire for the ceremony. Not until they came and saw, did the majority know the whole secret—their weapons were being burned. The weapons with which men and animals were killed were to be destroyed forever, as part of Peter's plan for their redemption. Slava Bohu!

The Cossacks, seeing the reflection of the flames, converged on the fire. Colonel Saratov, from his horse, shouted at the Dukhobors to stop them from massing there, but heedless of his threats, men, women and children of the faithful streamed across the fields like moths attracted to a great light.

In Kars settlement the plans were carried out similarly, but with less difficulty, as the feud between the faithful and the "No-Dukhobors" was less bitter, and in consequence there were no Cossacks in the vicinity that evening.

It was in Tiflis province where greatest stealth and maneuvering were required, and there in the treeless Wet Mountains the making of a rapid fire from manure bricks was assisted by barrels of kerosene. The place selected was above the village of Or-

lovka, on a narrow plateau of flat rock near the ancient caves in which fugitives and brigands had lived and died throughout Caucasias's checkered history.

Only a few of the most trusted Dukhobors were at the pyre when, after midnight, an elder threw his sputtering torch at its base. Flames licked at the kerosene, raced up the sides of the great pile, to disclose at its top a stubble of muzzle and breech-loading guns, their barrels pointing to the stars. Eerie shadows danced on the rocks. The caves of Orlovka, which had seen many strange sights, seemed to awaken, opening their mouths in black wonder. Here too, the glare in the sky was the signal for the faithful to assemble.

Meanwhile, a spy of the opposing faction had informed Governor Nakashidze, who was in the adjacent "bad" village of Horelovka, "what the mad ones are doing." Thus, Mikhael Hubanoff, and other prominent villagers, felt ill at ease for having called on the troops to protect them. "They meant to attack us, but seeing so many soldiers here, they decided, out of malice, to burn their guns. Praise God your soldiers were here."

Governor Nakashidze, believing this story, sent a dozen Cossacks to all the villages of the "mad Dukhobors" to bring the heads of the households to Horelovka. They, of course, were either at the fire, or on their way to it, and finding no one at home, except babies and the aged, the sergeant in charge of the party sent two of his men to inform the governor, while, with the others, he rode toward the fire.

A succession of musket shots echoed through the mountains. "Postoi! Wait!" the sergeant cautioned, "possibly the Dukhobors are attacking. Spread out in the shelter of the rocks and ride forward carefully."

Riding closer he saw about 2,000 men and women standing in the glare of the fire. All were singing a psalm. Some of the burning guns had charges of powder and shot left in them and now of themselves they fired their last rounds like Frankenstein salvos.

But the Cossack sergeant still was dubious. "Maybe there is a trick in it. One man, Eroshka, will ride closer with me. The rest of you stay back and cover us."

Approaching the edge of the assembly, he shouted, but the singing Dukhobors paid no attention.

"What are you doing here?" he shouted again, annoyed with being ignored. "What are you doing here, I ask you!" He tapped old Mahortoff on the shoulder with his whip.

Mahortoff stepped back from the assemblage, smiled sardonically and bowed. "We decided," he said, with zeal in his eyes, "to serve only one God and not to do any harm or any violence to anyone. We are not like you, we would not kill even the smallest birds. Therefore we are destroying our weapons so that other people, who are not yet Christians, will not be able to use them to do violence to animals or men."

"You old fool, you are mad. Are all of you crazy? Who is in authority here?"

"We have no one in authority," replied Mahortoff. "We are all equal."

"If you know what is good for you, you had better tell the heads of every household that the governor commands each one to appear before him immediately."

"As you wish. I will make known your message to the brothers."

Mahortoff disappeared into the assemblage. The singing stopped. There was much whispering among the men and women who, nevertheless, lived up to their parts and outwardly continued to ignore the presence of the Cossacks. From out of the heart of them came a voice in measured tones: "You may tell the governor that we must first finish our ceremony before God. After that, if he wishes, we will all go to see him."

"Who is speaking? Come out here so I can see you," said the sergeant.

"Nichevo, no matter," a voice answered. "It is not necessary to see any one of us when we are all holding to the same decision."

"You are making a mistake in behaving like this," shouted the sergeant. "I warn you . . ." but his voice was drowned in the rising waves of a psalm. The fire settled, sending a shower of sparks into the darkness.

"Such people," the sergeant shrugged to Eroshka; "what can you do with them? It is not for us to decide."

They turned their horses and rode into the shadows.

When Governor Nakashidze heard the report, his face became white and his thin lips compressed in anger.

"Captain Praga," he said to the Cossack commander, "at sunrise, take two hundred of your men and bring those holy ones to me. If necessary, use your whips!"

Cossack whips! A steel core around which is wound gut the thickness of a finger. Wooden handles, leather-covered. Lash tips loaded with lead.

When the sun rose over the mountains the Dukhobors still

stood in ceremonial formation. They had eaten nothing, and emotional strain added to their fatigue. The flaming pyre had burned down to a heap of glowing embers; the twisted metal of the guns was gray as ashes.

The notes of a psalm floated toward him, as Captain Praga, with his two hundred horsemen, spread out along the little plateau.

"Give them a chance to come voluntarily," he shouted. "Sergeant, ride to them and make known our last orders."

The double row of horses tossing their heads, lines of tall hats moving in unison with the excited motion of the horses. This array was too much for even the Dukhobors. Instinctively they herded closer. The singing became less—then ceased abruptly like the last notes of frogs in a pond.

"Captain Praga," said the sergeant returning, "they say that they do not want any trouble, but still they must first finish their ceremony before God—then all will go to the governor."

"Oh, they will, will they?" Praga's jaw tightened. "Then it is our duty to drive them to the governor. *Urah!*" He waved on his men, his own horse, spurs in its flanks, lunging forward.

Had the Dukhobors wished to run, there was nowhere to go. At one side was a steep incline, at right angles was the fire, and behind it a wall of rock. Packed in a tight group, they stood their ground, eight hundred hoofs pounding toward them. Soon they must be trampled and pushed into the canyon below. But no, as if influenced by something more powerful than their riders, the horses came to a sliding stop, so close to the crouching outer edge of men that they could feel the excited breathing of the animals.

Surprise crossed the faces of the horsemen. A bugle blew, and wheeling around they rode back to charge again.

The bugle blew. "*Urah!*" Loose reins. Thundering hoofs. Whips flashing in the sun. This time they would move the "holy ones" or break their bones. But again, with the grating noise of a rockslide, the animals braced themselves at the edge of the assemblage.

In fury, the Cossacks swung their whips, now at the horses, now at the Dukhobors. *Beshmeti* ripped from the backs of Dukhobor men. Shawls flew in tatters from the heads of women. The riders opened their ranks to allow the Dukhobors to move toward the defile leading down from the plateau. Like an ebb tide, men and women flowed over the rocks and down the green hillside; retreating, their code forbidding retaliation. Stubborn

courage, hearts pounding, backs bleeding beneath the blows and curses; on down to the roadway below, where Governor Nakashidze was waiting in his carriage. Here Praga called a halt, ordering the Dukhobor men to remove their caps in respect to the governor.

There was heavy silence. No heads were bare except those having lost their caps on the way.

"*Dukoborske muzhiki*, remove your caps!" he roared at them.

A voice from the tattered assemblage replied, "We see no one here for whom we should take off our caps. If someone arrives to greet us, then we will greet him in our Christian way."

"You will take off your caps because I tell you . . . because the governor is here. Cossacks! Cut those caps from their heads."

A whip lash wound around Nikifor's head, the lead weight dazing him. He held up his hands to protect his bleeding face. The lead, swinging down again, smashed his knuckles. He sank to the ground, the whip lash darting like a snake at his face and tearing an eye from its socket. Felled to the ground, he lay unconscious, his cap still on. And near-by brothers—warding off the blows with their arms—reached out and dragged him toward them, passing him on into the center of the crowd.

This process went on as in an ant hill, the wounded and broken being passed inside to the heart of the assemblage, and fresh Dukhobors appearing on the outer edge. This calculated and stubborn resistance further enraged Praga and his men, who swung their whips in frenzy.

In a furious assault they tried to drive themselves into a wedge and scatter the Dukhobors. Blood spurted from the backs of men and women. Old Mahortoff's beard was crimson. Red streaked the horses' bellies, and the grass was wet. The air filled with beast-like cries, steamed in sickening odor.

A bugle blew and the whips ceased to flail. Except for sobs and groans there was silence.

Angry yet fearful, Governor Nakashidze stood on the steps of his carriage. "Have you learned to obey? Will you hold allegiance to the Tsar, and behave as all good people do . . . behave as these people here," indicating several anti-Verigin Dukhobors who were there, and who stood back a distance to make certain they could not become confused with the "mad brothers."

"Be good like them?" a Dukhobor replied contemptuously. "They who stole the money and property which should have be-

longed of us all? Obey the government which sends our true brothers to harsh Siberia and the penal battalions . . .”

“And now wants us to join the army to kill people,” added another.

Governor Nakashidze’s lips trembled with rage at this persistent subordination. They asked for still more punishment.

“Captain Praga, teach these . . .”

But two young men came forward to his carriage, handing him neatly folded papers.

Nakashidze felt relieved. Perhaps some of these people had thought better. Could these papers be written apologies? As he unfolded them, his face showed surprise, then disappointment and finally anger.

When several more Dukhobors, cut and bleeding, approached his carriage and flung their military reservist papers at his feet, he lost his reason.

“Praga, order your men to unsling their rifles! Two rounds may teach these people a lesson.”

Count Krosspinski, fresh from St. Petersburg and sickened by the sight of blood, could not restrain himself from interfering. As the Cossacks put their rifles to their shoulders, he drew his sabre.

“You order Praga to fire,” he warned the governor, “and I will cleave your head in two!”

Nakashidze hesitated, and with mixed feelings ordered that the Cossacks sheath their rifles. Annoyed at public reversal of his command, he was relieved that he had not assumed a desperate responsibility.

“Captain Praga,” he said with an effort, “I leave you in charge. See that they go immediately to their villages. They must obey, you must make them obey. If they still refuse, punish them as you see fit. Insubordination such as this must not be allowed to spread through the empire. You will quarter your men in their homes.” Shaken, the governor left the scene.

About noon, the faithful, in a state of fearful exhaustion, reached their villages.

The burning of the guns in Elizevetpolsk and Kars settlements was attended with less brutality. In Elizevetpolsk when Colonel Seratov saw that the villagers continued running to the fire in spite of his warnings, he arrested twenty-three men whom he believed were ringleaders. The zeal of the Dukhobors, rising with

the mounting flames, made for stubborn resistance, though they remained true to their code of nonviolence amidst occasional whip lashings from Cossacks. When the young men who were on the army reserve list came forward to turn in their reservist papers, the county attorney lost his temper. Slashing to left and right with his fists, he pushed his way into the center of the assemblage. "You know neither God nor Tsar. You have not the courage of dogs," he reviled them. Later when he emerged, disheveled from the crowd, not a Dukhobor had retaliated.

"We believe as Christ said," one of them shouted. "Do unto others as we would have done unto ourselves."

When the sun rose there were bruised faces, and eighty of the faithful had been arrested. Those who remained free returned to their villages. They were martyrs to Christ, "and if it had not been for the Katelnikoff family, who headed the 'bad ones,' the Cossacks would not have come, and the true brothers would not have been taken away to prison."

In Kars settlement, old Ivan Ivanovich Osachoff was the honored elder who touched his torch to the fifteen four-horse wagonloads of wood of which their pyre was built. On a hill with a flat top above the Karseina River, the flames rising in the night pointed the way to the faithful, who left their villages and hurried across the fields. There they assembled in ceremonial fashion about one hundred and fifty feet from the fire, "so we will not be thrown into the flames if the soldiers come to persecute us."

The inhabitants of the neighboring Turkish and Armenian villages, who had heard many rumors, and who knew "something was about to happen," saw the glare in the sky, and, unable to restrain their curiosity, they cautiously set out toward the rise of land above the river. Halfway, and before they could properly discern the confused mass of humanity in the shifting light of the flames, they stopped in wonder at "the sound of cannon firing." When these boomings, which the older ones had not heard since the war, were followed by a desultory volley of musket shots, speculation as to what was happening on the hill rose to fever pitch, and Mussulmen were moved to tears for the Christian Dukhobors. More cautiously now, the audience of some three hundred men and women moved forward in the hope of finding themselves gallery seats not exposed to the soldiers of the Tsar. The rising and falling of a Dukhobor psalm reached their ears, and as they crept still closer they could see the Dukhobors standing in orderly fashion. Where were the dead and dying? Where

were the soldiers? Allah be praised, they had not all been killed!

Puzzled and slightly disappointed, the spectators later discovered that the "cannon firing" was unintentionally simulated by gunpowder which the Dukhobors had consigned to the flames with their rifles and swords.

When the red embers of the fire turned to gray with the first rays of dawn, and the Dukhobors paused in their ceremony, the bolder came closer, and soon all the Turks and Armenians heard why the guns had been burned. With such persuasive zeal did the Dukhobors instruct their visitors in the creed of nonviolence, that even the followers of Mohammed felt constrained to agree. How indeed could there be peace on earth unless everyone refused to have firearms, refused to fight in an army, refused to fight with swords, whips, sticks, feet, fists? And how was everyone to stop being evil, unless some men showed the way?

"This we are doing," said a Dukhobor. "We are showing the way. Someday everyone will follow."

"Even if first *we* have to go to our death," said an elder, with tears in his eyes.

"And now when *we* have shown *you* the way by burning all our guns," added a practical woman, "I hope your people will become good Christians and stop stealing our ducks at night."

"Nichevo, no matter," said another. "Soon we may have no need for ducks, nor for feather beds. I tell you truly we do not know what God has in store for us."

A young Turk, not imbued with the "new spirit," recalled a silver-mounted pistol which he had seen in a Dukhobor home. His black eyes looked yearningly at the twisted metal in the fire.

"Why could you not have given some pistols to us, instead of wasting them?"

Before a Dukhobor could answer this untimely question the lad was reprimanded by an older Mussulman in an enormous sheep-skin hat which had seen many summers.

"You young fool," he admonished, "you do not understand that these people do not want *anyone* to use those guns. That is why they burned them. Understand?" And by way of demonstrating his newly acquired understanding of nonviolence, the old one kicked at the boy, who displayed his alacrity by jumping out of reach.

After a consultation, it was decided that the young men should take their military reservist papers to County Governor Birakov, who was a Tartar by lineage and a philosopher by inclination. He

listened to their protests and said, "You may go home. Your reservist papers I must send to higher authorities, and as they decide, so it will be with you. It is not in my power to pass sentence for actions with which, if you believe in them, I cannot quarrel."

Indisposed to Birakov's lenient view, the governor of Kars province sent Cossacks to arrest ringleaders. In a few days there were fifteen Dukhobors on their way to imprisonment in the city of Kars.

One young zealot, who had turned his reservist papers in to Birakov, felt badly that he too was not suffering as were his brothers in prison. Consequently he approached Birakov.

"Sir," he said, "I do not wish to obey the Tsar and all his powers, and never again will I obey his commands. I will not fight in the army, nor kill anyone. Slava Bohu!"

"Anything else?" asked Birakov.

"Nothing," he replied.

"Is there anything else you wish to tell me?"

"There is nothing, I wish only to live peacefully in the Spirit of Christ."

"Then go home and do so as long as you can," advised Birakov.

In a few days the young zealot returned to go through the same conversation. When he came for the third time, Birakov sent him home with two Cossacks who whipped him to his village.

CHAPTER NINE

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

IN THE WET MOUNTAINS, Captain Praga's Cossacks, quartered in the villages of the faithful, behaved in a manner customary to a mob of soldiery given free rein in enemy territory. Patriotic duty excused a month of feasting, floggings, and rapine sufficient to satiate even hard-boiled Captain Praga to a point where later he committed suicide.

Ringleaders among the Wet Mountain Dukhobors were thrown into prison or sentenced to penal battalions, but still they refused military service and rejected the authority of the government. St. Petersburg, troubled with anti-imperial agitation from Vladivostok to the Ukraine, was convinced insubordination must be crushed lest it undermine the morale of peasant conscripts throughout the empire.

St. Petersburg commanded that the Wet Mountain Dukhobors obey, or be exterminated. Thus, on July 8, 1895, in accord with the imperial decree, thirty-five families were forced from their homes and trekked one hundred miles northwestward into exile. Within two weeks, four hundred and thirty-nine more families, under police escort, were moving through the Caucasian Mountains to the valleys of Signak, Dushet, Tionet, and Gori districts. En route, Kiril Konkin was flogged to death, but more than 4,000 men, women and children, in about eight hundred wagons reached exile in fever-ridden swamps not far from the railway line to Batum.

Here the plan of the government seemed calculated to force them to abandon their way of life. They were not allowed to settle on land; nor were the Georgian landowners allowed to rent land to them. They might work on the estates, but there was not enough work to support them. Soon they suffered from undernourishment, malaria, dysentery, and the effects of a roving life. In an effort to conceal the affair, the government rigidly censored reports concerning them.

When word of their plight reached Count Leo Tolstoy, he was incensed. Barred from the press of Russia, he turned to that of England. He dispatched Paul Birukov to Caucasia to gain infor-

mation. On October 23, 1895, an account of the Dukhobors by Birukov, vouched for by Tolstoy, appeared in The Times (London). Mainly from Tolstoyan sources, news and views of the persecution appeared in print in Russia, despite the censorship, with the result that an army general was appointed to "hear the Dukhobors' statement . . . to explain to them the error of their ways, and to offer restoration of land and property to those who would take the oath of allegiance and comply with conscription." He summoned Dukhobors to appear before him, and went so far as to commend their pacifist views; he, too, would like to see wars cease and all men live together in Christian brotherhood. "The time," he added, "has not yet come, and the army is still necessary for the protection of peaceful men and women."

But the faithful, echoed the words of Peter Verigin, "The time has come for us."

Though the Dukhobors of Elizetvolsk and Kars, who had not been exiled en masse, were refused passports out of Caucasia, secret messengers continued to traverse the 2,000 miles to Verigin in Obdorsk. The first man to leave Caucasia after the burning of the guns was Mikhael Androsoff, who had a passport issued prior to the burning of the guns, and which was marked good for one year anywhere in the empire. He left his village in August and went to the village of Terpani where members of the Verigin family now lived. After consulting with them, he went on to the city of Kars where his own brother, Peter, was in prison, together with Vasili Verigin, Vasili Veraschagin, and several others. Refused permission to see them, he attempted to return at night, to find out in which part of the prison they were. When he was discovered, he pleaded that he be allowed to leave unmolested.

"So I was not arrested," Androsoff wrote in an account of his adventure. "Next morning early, I went to the jail again. The prison stood on a hill with a deep valley to cross, the soldiers continually walking back and forth in front of the cells. Managing to crawl past the guard I called quietly, 'Vasili!' It was Vasili Verigin's cell. His face came to the window, and I could recognize him though it was still dark."

Vasili told Androsoff how best to reach Peter in Siberia, and asked him to tell Peter that everyone was true to his Christian advice. Then Vasili Verigin told Androsoff to walk west three windows to the cell of Vasili Veraschagin.

Returning to his village, he entered it at night so that Gubeyev, the Georgian starosta, might not know he had been away. "At

home I had everything ready for my long journey, only my wife and four elders knew. On October 17, I said farewell to my family, the children sensing something wrong, my oldest son and daughter trying to find out what was happening, but my wife wouldn't tell them. My wife came with me to the back yard, and my team was hidden just outside the village."

He set out in the wagon for the village of Terpani, once more to visit the Verigins, get their final greetings to Peter, and pick up the gold rubles for him. "Near Terpani, I got off and walked, while the wagon went on, by a different road." The Verigins sent Semon Chernoff with Androsoff to show him the way as far as Tiflis. As the two were leaving the village "a man came running with frightened eyes and said, 'I have heard you are going to Siberia, to Petushka. Please take him this gold coin from me.' I took the five rubles, asking him, 'Who told you?' but he would not say. So Semon and I went on to Alexandropol. There at the postyard, I asked if they would hire me a team. They said, 'Why not go on the mail coach leaving in two hours?'"

By coach Androsoff and Chernoff went to Akstafa, then by train to Elizavetpol, arriving there that night. In the morning Androsoff got inside Elizavetpol prison where he saw Ivan Verigin. Ivan said, "If you are able to get to my brother in Siberia give him my greetings and tell him that no one of us is weakening."

Androsoff and Chernoff then went on to Tiflis where they found Ivan Evin and Vasili Obedkoff. Obedkoff, Peter's faithful man Friday, was at this time stationed in Tiflis to advise the secret messengers how best to reach the ruler in Siberia. On the advice of Obedkoff, Androsoff went on to the Black Sea port of Batum, and parting from Chernoff there, he boarded a steamer for Novorossisk. On the ship Androsoff felt lonely, did not like the motion of the boat "in a terrific storm," but "enjoyed the apples" Chernoff had given him at Batum.

At Novorossisk, he bought a ticket. "On the train I met a man from Petropavlovsk who was going to a monastery on the other side of Omsk, to pray for his soul." The pilgrim told Androsoff that he must travel "from monastery to monastery and pray and pray, thus, in such a manner, can a person be sure his soul will enter heaven." The pilgrim admitted he should go on foot, but the monasteries were far apart!

Androsoff undertook to correct the pilgrim in his religious error. "I understand it differently. I think it is not necessary to

go to these monasteries, it means extra expense, and you are only giving money to people who live in them like princes, eating up the labor of other people." Each man should pray to God for himself, said Androsoff, and each man should decide for himself what is right instead of listening to priests and monks who are looked upon as holy, and kept in idleness. At Cheliabinsk, they said good-bye.

Androsoff then hired a *troika* and drove three days northward, bought himself a "good fur coat," and "caught a ride with two men in a sleigh, then took the mail couch to Tobolsk." From Tobolsk to Berezov he drove six days and six nights in a sleigh by post horses. At Berezov he was detained two weeks by the police before he slipped out at night in a hired sleigh. In a storm the driver lost his way. While trying to find the road on foot, they stumbled on the home of an Ostyatse, the Eskimo-like natives of the tundra. "One of them hitched up a light sleigh with a reindeer, and we found the road and went on with a dog ahead of us. When dawn came we met another native with a pair of reindeer, and my driver hired these reindeer, hitching them to our sleigh."

Traveling night and day with changes of reindeer, Androsoff reached Obdorsk. No sooner had he found Peter's house and given him greetings, than Androsoff was arrested and taken to the police station. Then Peter came to the police station and arranged that Androsoff should be let out to go to his house for dinner. Thus was Androsoff able to give Peter the few hundred rubles he had brought, relate about the burning of the guns, the imprisonment, harsh exile and persecution of the brothers. Peter was very interested, asking many questions, and saying how it was necessary to suffer with Christ, though no one could harm a soul, but only a body. "Let three persons come to me in the next summer," Peter said. He looked at Androsoff's felt boots, saying they were not very warm. Peter took his boots from his feet and made Androsoff put them on. Secreted in those boots was a letter to the Dukhobors in Caucasia. Dinner was no sooner finished than the police magistrate came.

"Get ready," he told Androsoff, "you are going back."

They walked to the police station and there were the three reindeer lying in the snow. "Look, they are waiting for you," said the magistrate. And Mikhael Androsoff set out for Caucasia, to reassure the faithful in their suffering for Christ.

After delays and short stays in prisons along the way, he reached home. The advice which Peter had sent with him, that the

faithful hold out against obeying the government at all costs, was relayed to every village in the Elizevetpolsk and Kars districts, and then carried north to the Wet Mountain exiles in the valleys of Dushet, Gori and Tionet.

By the spring of 1896, more than one hundred of the 4,300 exiles had died of malnutrition, fever and dysentery. The local state and church authorities refused to allow them to bury their dead in the cemeteries, and the Dukhobors, having no land of their own, sometimes carried the bodies from place to place until a Georgian noble or peasant would allow them to bury the corpse in a private garden.

Some of the Georgians exploited the Dukhobors, refused to pay even the small wages agreed upon and stole their ill-fed horses and their few wagons. Other Georgians took pity on them, sympathized with them, and surreptitiously allowed them to plant crops of vegetables. To add to the misery of semistarvation, the exiles, when they had shelter, lived in crowded huts, lacking ventilation and fuel. Had they not received money for food from the Kars and Elizevetpolsk Dukhobors, starvation coupled with general debility might have reduced their numbers by one-third in the first year of their exile.

Kars and Elizevetpolsk faithful of military age continued to be imprisoned or sent to penal battalions. In the Ekaterinograd penal battalion, it was customary to flay the prisoners with thorn brambles. The men to be "disciplined" were made to lie flat on their bellies while guards gave each one thirty strokes. At each stroke the thorns entered the prisoner's back, and with a deft movement the guard pulled his bramble whip so that the thorns tore away streaks of flesh. To prevent blood poisoning, alcohol was poured in the wounds which were washed out with brushes made of hair. After that the sufferers were confined to underground cells for a day. On the day following, rifles were put into their hands, and they were asked to drill. If they refused, the floggings were renewed.

Among the Dukhobors in Ekaterinograd battalion was Mathew Lebedeff who had been arrested after the burning of the guns in Kars district. When Anton Fofanoff obtained permission to visit him with food, Mathew was greatly concerned because he had once accepted a rifle. "My heart is very sore," he said, "that I could not hold out against the whole of the punishment." He begged Anton to take this confession to all the brothers and sisters and to his mother.

In August, Mikhael Sherbinin died as a result of floggings suffered in the penal battalion gymnasium.

On November 1, Tolstoy wrote to the commander of the Eka-terinograd penal battalion concerning "the confinement in your battalion of the Caucasian Dukhobors who have refused military service.

"The military authorities, who have condemned them, and you, who are executing on them the sentence of the court, evidently regard the conduct of these men as harmful, and believe in the efficacy of those severe measures which are directed against them. But there are people, and many—to whose number I also belong—who regard the conduct of the Dukhobors as great heroism, most useful for humanity. In this light, such conduct was regarded by the ancient Christians, and similarly it is, and will be, regarded by true Christians of the new time."

Tolstoy went on to say that he realized the commander could not correct the mistakes of higher authorities, but, while there were duties of office to be fulfilled, he was also faced with duties not temporal but eternal. Warning him of God's law "which not only forbids us to kill and torture each other, but enjoins us to help and love each other," Tolstoy wrote of "rebukes of conscience" which would leave the commander of the penal battalion neither possibility of joy nor peace, and implored him to do all he could to alleviate the suffering of the martyrs in his battalion.

From then on, it is said, the commander was less harsh.

That autumn, the imperial government issued an order that those who refused military service because of their religious beliefs, should no longer be shown the error of their ways in military places of detention. The authorities had discovered that the ideas of the zealots were affecting other prisoners. Now the fate of recalcitrant recruits varied with the whim of local governors, but floggings and exile continued.

Despite all efforts of censorship, news of the Dukhobors' stubborn resistance in the face of imperial brutality, continued to leak out. Thus the authorities expelled from Caucasia several sympathizers and missionaries who were counted as meddling agitators.

Soon after this, on December 12, 1896, three Tolstoyans published a pamphlet concerning the "terrible cruelty now being perpetrated in Caucasia." This appeal for funds with which to aid the Dukhobors, was vouched for in an accompanying letter by Leo Tolstoy who saw in the Dukhobors the flesh and blood

exemplification of Christian anarchy so dear to his own heart at this time. He pictured the Dukhobors and their Christian martyrdom as an example and an event of the greatest importance in the world, beside which the decrees of emperors, the deliberations of parliaments, and the influences of universities, "papal encyclicals, socialist congresses, and so on," paled into insignificance. These simple and illiterate peasants, the Dukhobors, had, of their own volition, he said, elected to live their lives in accord with the teachings of Jesus Christ, had actually accomplished that which other men only talked about. From his distance, Tolstoy saw in the Dukhobors "the resurrection of Christ himself." Urging people everywhere to help lest this Christian awakening be stamped out, he flailed "the obduracy and blindness of the Russian government, in directing against the 'Christians of the Universal Brotherhood' a persecution like those of pagan times."

Neither Tolstoy's conclusion nor the appeal contained a suggestion of the Dukhobor theocracy, nor was the name of Peter Verigin mentioned, because neither Tolstoy nor any of the Tolstoyans were aware, at this time, that Verigin had absorbed Tolstoy's philosophy, and that, posing as Christ himself, he had passed it on to his credulous followers.

The appeal left the impression that each simple peasant, each Dukhobor, had of his own accord, guided only by his reason and intuition, in the Spirit of Christ, decided to abandon *tabak*, vodka, meat and soldiering; and stay with their convictions in the face of terrible persecution. "By *general resolution* they fixed on the night of the 28th of June for the purpose of burning their arms . . ." ran the appeal.

Small wonder that Protestant Christians, idealists, liberals and intellectuals were roused in sympathy for Dukhobors by this presentation designating them as the highest living example of both Christian anarchy and Christian democracy in practice. "Behold," wrote Tolstoy in all sincerity, "such people exist!"

Peter Verigin and the Dukhobors made no attempt to enlighten their new-found sympathizers and supporters concerning the secrets of Dukhobor government. Imperial authority was so discredited by all but its own bureaucracy that, had it possessed definite proof of the Dukhobor theocracy, it would not have been believed.

The three Tolstoyans who signed the appeal, Paul Birukov, John Tregubov, and Vladimir Tchertkov, went to St. Petersburg to present Tsar Nikolai II with a petition on behalf of the Dukhobors. They were not allowed to see the Tsar; their papers and

books were seized. Birukov and Tregubov were banished to the Baltic provinces, while Tchertkov was given the choice of a similar sentence, or of exile from Russia. He chose the latter, leaving for England, where, with Tolstoy's approval, he published a booklet, *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, in which the Dukhobors were extolled as "always truthful in their speech, accounting all lying as a great sin."

Tolstoy endorsed these statements. "The facts related in this appeal," he wrote, "composed by three of my friends, have been repeatedly verified, revised, and sifted; the appeal itself has been several times recast and corrected; everything has been rejected from it which, although true, might seem an exaggeration; so that all that is now stated in this appeal is the real, indubitable truth, as far as the truth is accessible to men guided only by the religious desire, in this publication of the truth, to serve God and their neighbors, both the persecuted and the persecutors."

The publication in English, with a preface by John Kenworthy of the Brotherhood Church (London), aroused the sympathy of persons in England and the United States. Money with which to alleviate suffering among the exiles was sent to Tchertkov's Tolstoyan headquarters in England.

An Englishman, Arthur St. John, ex-army captain, of pacifist sympathies, was dispatched to Caucasia, where he managed to stay among the exiles long enough to distribute material aid. Then he, too, was arrested and banished from Russia.

The local authorities in Kars and Elizavetpolsk provinces had been instructed that no Dukhobor be allowed to leave his village without a permit. Few permits were issued and those only for short distances. This order, however, accompanied though it was by threats of jail, flogging and exile, failed to stop Dukhobor messengers from crossing the breadth of Russia to visit their ruler in Siberia.

One of these intrepid messengers, Ivan Paramonivich Abrosimoff, was a year en route from Caucasia to Siberia and back. In May of 1896, he left his village with two hundred and fifty rubles, part of which he was to use for expenses, the remainder to be given to Peter. With little difficulty, he crossed the Ural Mountains and in June reached the Siberian village of Samarovsk. There he waited two days for a ship to take him north down the river. Fearing arrest if he tarried long, he hired a boatman in the village. While he was eating a meal before setting out, a police

officer, who had arrived from the south in a government river ship, questioned him as to his passport.

"What? You have no papers? Then I must arrest you," said the officer.

"Well," said Ivan, "If you wish to arrest me that is your business. But I have done nothing to deserve being put in prison, and I do not want to trouble the government when it is not necessary."

All that Ivan would reveal to the officer was that his home was in Caucasia, and that he was "on a journey." When further questioning failed, the officer took Ivan's money amounting to two hundred and thirteen rubles and twenty-one kopeks, and put him in the *kutuska*, the one-room jail where "the bedbugs were as many as ants in an anthill. . . . I was unable to sit down in one place because of the parasites biting me."

In the morning he was put on board a government boat bound down the river for Tobolsk. He was allowed five rubles of his own money to supplement the regulation food allowance of four kopeks a day. Each time the boat stopped along the eleven-day journey, "the guards were changed, but I could see no way to escape to the shore. The mosquitoes and black flies were very bad, and sometimes at night I was afraid to sleep, thinking the sailors might throw me into the water."

On reaching Tobolsk, "I was put in prison, for which I was very thankful, slava Bohu, as here I had a rest." Ivan thought he would be detained only a few days. But weeks, then months went by, and he began to get used "to the other people with their shaven heads and the clanking chains; the skin on their faces the color of yellow cantaloupes." For five and a half months he did not once see the sky, trees, or earth. "Only the floor, bare walls and ceiling." As his code forbade him meat, he lived mostly on rye bread and water. He got to know all the prisoners. The guard liked him, so he was allowed to write letters to the brothers and sisters in Caucasia.

In November he was freed from the prison building, for the first time. "The air was crisp and fresh, it was very good to see even the cold snow again." But he had not much strength because he had eaten none of the stew. Each week when the government official came to inspect the prison, Ivan asked him to let him have some of his own money. Eventually, given a few rubles of it, "I at once ordered two bricks of tea, ten pounds of sugar, half a pood of white bread." The supplies he shared with his cell mates, who

did not know how to thank him. "It was as though new life had entered our prison . . . They were sorry when I left."

Ivan was allowed to leave after he had been detained eight months. On February 20, 1897, he started southward in the regular prison chain. "The road back was very long and very cold." Chained together, wrist to wrist, the manacles froze, wrists were frostbitten and rubbed raw. When they transferred at larger cities, they were driven like oxen down the streets. "In this manner we passed through Moscow." From Moscow, south to Sevastapol, and thence by boat on the Black Sea to Caucasia.

Ivan was set free in Caucasia on May 5, 1897.

At this stage the faithful decided to dispatch more than one messenger at a time. Some messengers were able to reach him, others failed, but not once did one of them divulge his errand to the authorities. A messenger who had almost reached Verigin, and who was arrested and told to return to Caucasia, was given a note to that effect. On the note was the name of his native village, and he, after traveling a short distance homeward, again started north to Obdorsk. The police officials whom he encountered did not know that his home village was in Caucasia, instead of Siberia. Thus he managed to see Peter and return home safely.

The Wet Mountain exiles in the Georgian valleys suffered from an eye disease from insufficient nourishment. The eyes of the afflicted first became bloodshot and painful, then covered with a white film, and in the last stage, temporarily blind. "Besides this dreadful and strange disease," wrote a Tolstoyan, who was among them, "they are exceedingly exhausted by fever, dyspepsia, cough, pain in the legs, swelling of the legs and other parts of the body. In one village I found a prostrate individual in almost every habitation. Many of them die. . . ."

While his followers suffered, Peter Verigin, in Obdorsk, wrote letters, read Tolstoy's books, and grew cucumbers in hotbeds. To the faithful he wrote lengthy epistles sympathizing with the brothers and sisters for their suffering in the Spirit of Christ.

. . . furthermore dear brothers and sisters [he wrote on September 2, 1896] I offer for your consideration that we should in future call ourselves "The Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood." The name "Dukhobor" is now understood by the majority of people; and though we shall in future still invoke the Spirit of the Lord, to strive against the weakness of the flesh and against sin, yet the name "Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood" will tell more clearly that

we look on all men as our brothers, according to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ. From this time we will, slava Bohu, take the name of "Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood." Inform all the brothers and sisters. . . . I have a letter sent to me from Moscow that has come from England from a society called "The Brotherhood Church" [John Kenworthy's group in London] . . . I have written a reply . . .

About the same day, Verigin wrote to the Brotherhood Church, London:

I am a follower of teachings of Jesus Christ and have lived in exile nearly ten years for proclaiming the Spirit of Truth. Till now our community have been called Dukhobors. Recently among us a movement has arisen making for the perfecting of actual life, and we have decided to call our community "The Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood," of which fact I inform you with gladness and with love, esteeming you as brothers.

Both letters served their purpose.¹¹ A suggestion from Peter was a command to his followers.¹² The letter to the Brotherhood Church further convinced the English sympathizers that each Dukhobor was guided "only by his own conscience and reason in the spirit of Christ." Verigin's followers adopted the lengthy title, and their admirers in England worked the harder to raise funds.

In the same year Verigin copied excerpts from Tolstoy's book *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, incorporating them in a letter to the Dukhobors, as if he, Verigin, had conceived this masterpiece of pacifist oratory. The epistle, mainly consisting of Tolstoy's translation of the *Declaration of Sentiments* which William Lloyd Garrison drafted for a peace convention in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1838, was memorized word for word by the Dukhobors.

We cannot acknowledge allegiance to any human government; neither can we oppose any such government by a resort to physical force. We recognize but one King and Lawgiver, one Judge and Ruler of mankind. We are bound by the laws of a Kingdom which is not of this world; the subjects of which are forbidden to fight; in which Mercy and Truth are met together, and Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other; which have no state lines, no national partitions, no geographical boundaries; in which there is no distinction of rank nor division of caste, nor inequality of sex; the officers of which are Peace, its exactors Righteousness, its walls Salvation, and its gates

Praise; and which is destined to break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms . . .

As every human government is upheld by physical strength, and its laws are enforced virtually at the point of a bayonet, we cannot hold any office which imposes upon its incumbent the obligation to compel men to do right, on pain of imprisonment or death. We therefore voluntarily exclude ourselves from every legislative and judicial body, and repudiate all human politics, worldly honors, and stations of authority. If we cannot occupy a seat in the legislature or on the bench, neither can we elect others to act as our substitutes in any such capacity.

It follows that we cannot sue any man at law, to compel him by force to restore anything which he may have wrongfully taken from us or others . . .

We expect to prevail through the foolishness of preaching—striving to commend ourselves unto every man's conscience in the sight of God.

In entering upon the great work before us, we are not unmindful that, in its prosecution, we may be called to test our sincerity even as in a fiery ordeal. It may subject us to insult, outrage, suffering; yea, even death . . .

So ran the "declaration" of Garrison, the United States pacifist, antislavery champion, founder of the short-lived periodical *Non-resistant*.

He could not have known that, years later, in peculiar fashion, his ringing declaration would become part of the sacred lore of thousands of Russian peasants.

In the years 1896-97, Peter Verigin wrote more voluminous letters to the faithful and to sympathizers. To his followers he guardedly "suggested" variations of the same theme, the Christian way of life. Slava Bohu!

To Izumchenko, an exile whom he had met in prison in Moscow, to other theist-intellectuals, dreamers, idealists and humanitarians, he wrote verbose epistles. "Is this right? . . . Is that right?" He took Tolstoy's philosophy as his own and extended it, "going Tolstoy one better," as Aylmer Maude remarked later. Yet, early in 1896, writing of Tolstoy to an exile, he asked, "What does his philosophy consist of? I have not read his works." Corresponding with the Tolstoyans, Birukov and Tregubov, corresponding with Tolstoy himself, he did not once give an inkling that he, Verigin, was Christ to many Dukhobors; he reiterated instead that he was "only a poor brother exiled to harsh Siberia."

These letters to non-Dukhobors were in curious manner to influ-

ence the faithful after their exodus to Canada. Thus, random excerpts are of interest:

I seem to remember Bellamy's words that the present organized society can be compared to a prodigious coach to which the masses of humanity were harnessed; the top of the carriage was covered with people who with cudgels urged the harnessed ones . . .

According to Darwin, the reindeer exists solely for the purpose that their hides be removed from them and their flesh eaten, while overshoes be made by the human beings, or rather the parodies of human beings. Then why should we not use the hides of human beings and make some really useful articles, like chamois? . . . according to Darwin man is an animal . . . has fenced himself off with certain privileges . . . therefore he can kill and skin anyone but humans . . .

Education, that is, literacy, acts as a hindrance and a brake to man's development; that is, the development of knowledge of truth . . .

Thus, after carefully examining this question fully, I consider it would be better if there were no literacy. Such literacy like this letter, to transmit one's thoughts through distance, I allow; however in the next letter I intend to speak about this question in which I will refute even this necessity . . .

Christ freed man from slavery of physical unnatural labor, like an ox from the yoke, and united him with God . . .

Man must not labor but only must contemplate, and enjoy the world around him. The reason why we find ourselves in physical labor . . . the first call of the Saviour, "Leave your nets and follow me. I will make you fishers of men." From this it logically follows that, if people gradually, if they wish to make Christians of themselves—and we must become Christians—must cease from physical labor and go out and proclaim the New Testament, that is, Christ's teaching. "Take thy cross and follow me," and to follow Christ, one must live in the same way he did, for we see that physically Christ did nothing in work, likewise his apostles . . .

School undermines the morals of children . . .

Received two new books, one by Leo Tolstoy *Work of the Last Years*, and another by Luchutsko. I had another book of Tolstoy's, but it was held up by the authorities at Berezov . . .

My housekeeper is concerned that I wish to eat cabbage with vegetable oil. People are amazed that I eat no animal fat and still feel my full strength . . .

I am writing a very short letter because my time is taken up with physical labor . . .

I was given notice that it is forbidden for me to leave the town, even to go after firewood . . . I refuse to consider such orders,

because in my ten years of exile I have never attempted to run away...

(To Tolstoy) It appears to me that artificial attempts of man to help man, especially in spiritual development, has created such a sad condition among the masses in general . . .

Lately a Dukhobor came to visit me. He stayed only for five minutes and then was arrested for not having a passport. Such visits are entirely unnecessary, but Mother does not believe my letters can be true . . .

If we cannot get on . . . without knives, then we shall never free ourselves from the power of contemporary civilization.

It is important for me to know; in order to live rightly . . . should we keep cattle? . . . For it is very natural that if fruits exist man should feed on them. That is my ultimate conviction . . .

The winds usually blow everything out; but this summer was so nice that I believe the cucumbers could have grown in ordinary beds . . .

CHAPTER TEN

TURNING TO CANADA

EARLY IN 1898, death, desertion and Siberian exile had reduced the numbers of the faithful in Caucasia to less than 8,000, including those in Caucasian prisons. Of the 4,300 Wet Mountain people exiled to Georgian Caucasia after the burning of the guns, six hundred were dead; while one hundred or more, unable to withstand the persecution, had joined the "bad brothers." In Kars and Elizevetpolsk provinces, desertions accounted mainly for the decrease, though about fifty, including several of Peter's brothers, had been sent to Siberian exile. Besides, there were few births, for Peter's order to cease sexual intercourse remained in force.

Acute suffering among the survivors in Georgian Caucasia, insecurity and imprisonment among the Kars and Elizevetpolsk people, had caused many to think of mass migration "to some other country, as the government here will not allow us to live peacefully."

Peter Verigin vacillated concerning the migration of his followers to a foreign country. On the whole he was opposed to it, but pressure was so great that, despite indecision, they continued to talk of leaving Russia "forever." To go where? England, or possibly America. In their agitation they sent messengers to Tolstoy. Through the Tolstoyans who had visited Caucasia, his name had become well known among the Dukhobors, who considered him a friend as well as the "leader" of a group of lesser Christians.

Soon after this the Dukhobors learned that Peter had written a letter to the Tsaritsa wherein he, speaking as one of the Dukhobor brethren, requested "the right to emigrate to some foreign country," if the "Christians" would not be allowed to live peacefully in Russia. This knowledge caused increased clamor for migration.

Whether Verigin really favored his flock leaving Russia, at the time of his letter to the Tsaritsa, or whether he made the request to strengthen the plea against persecution, is not revealed. Nor is it certain that his letter reached Tsaritsa Alexandra, though it was placed in the hands of Her Majesty's ladies in waiting.

Peter omitted to sign his family name; neither did he date his

letter, nor reveal that it was written from Obdorsk. For that caution he made up in the Tolstoyan boldness of the letter itself:

May the Almighty God guard your soul, in this life as well as in the future life to come, Sister Alexandra.

I, a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, am living in the testimony and glad tidings of his truth, I have been in exile since the year 1886, from the Dukhobors' Community of Caucasia. The name "Dukhobor" should be understood to mean that we in the Spirit and with our souls profess God. See the Gospel, the meeting of Christ with the Samaritan woman at the well.

I implore you, my sister in Christ, Alexandra, to entreat your husband, Nikolai, to spare the Christians in Caucasia from further persecution. To you I appeal because I believe that your heart is more turned toward the Almighty God. At the present time the women and children are suffering most; hundreds of husbands and fathers are confined in prisons and thousands of families are scattered among the mountain *auls*, where the authorities incite the native inhabitants to behave coarsely to them. This is especially hard on the Christian women. Lately even women and children were put in prisons.

Our only fault is that we try to become Christians, as far as it is possible for us. With regard to some of our actions, our understanding may not be sufficiently enlightened.

You are probably acquainted with the teachings of vegetarianism; we share in such humanitarian beliefs, lately we ceased using meat for food, drinking wine, and many other things of a similar nature, because we consider that the habits mentioned lead to corrupt life and cast a shadow on the soul of man. Refusing to kill animals, we will not, under any circumstances, take away human life. By killing an ordinary person, even though he may be a robber, it appears to us that we would be killing Christ himself. The State demands our brothers train in the art of handling weapons in order to learn the science of murder. The Christians are not willing to agree to this; they are put in prisons, beaten and starved. Our sisters and mothers are disgracefully treated for women, and often jeered at with, "Where is your God?" "Why does he not help you?" Our God is in Heaven and on earth and fulfills His will. Psalms of David 113-114.

This is especially sad, as it all takes place in a Christian country. Our Community in Caucasia consists of about 20,000* people. Is it possible that such a small number of people could render harm to

* This must have been exaggeration for the sake of emphasis. The actual figure was not more than 8,000.

a state organization, if these people were not taken as soldiers? They are being conscripted, but that is useless, thirty men are now in the fortress of Ekaterinograd penal battalion where they are tortured by the authorities, who in so doing torment themselves. Man we regard as the Temple of the Living God, and in no case can we prepare ourselves to kill him, even though we be threatened with death. The most convenient arrangement would be to settle us in some place where we could live and work peacefully. All the State requirements in the form of taxes we will pay, only we cannot be soldiers.

Servant of Christ,

PETER,

Living in exile in the Government of Tobolsk.

Verigin was not sure that he wanted his flock to leave Russia, yet on July 22, 1898, he wrote to his mother in Caucasia, "I am waiting for the time when I and all the exiles will be freed to emigrate to another country." A month later he wrote to Leo Tolstoy, "I would like to know your opinion about the emigration of the Dukhobors out of Russia. I, personally, am almost against emigration because members of our community are striving toward self-perfection, and therefore no matter where we emigrate we would take our weaknesses with us. If it is possible to emigrate, then there must be certain points of agreement; the government must return all the exiled Dukhobors to their homes and families and give us a period of two or three years to prepare for emigration."

Thus, while asking Tolstoy's advice, Verigin had at the same time expressed a philosophical concept very dear to Tolstoy's heart. Naturally Tolstoy agreed with Verigin, feeling himself more than ever "a weaker brother" of the Dukhobors, who were the only true Christians on earth.

It was the Wet Mountain exiles in Georgian Caucasia who continued to press for land, somewhere, anywhere. They had managed to get a petition into the hands of the mother of Nikolai II, when she visited Caucasia in the autumn of 1897. The petition requested the right to group in large settlements and be exempt from military conscription, or that all be allowed to emigrate beyond Russia. This petition brought results. The Dukhobors, with certain exceptions, were given permission to emigrate, by the following order :

24th February 1898

ORDER 154: *From the office of the Governor of Tiflis to Ivan Abrosimoff.*

Relative to the petition placed before Her Most August and All Highest Majesty The Empress Maria Feodorovna, by the Dukhobor vegetarians who were exiled in 1895 . . . and with regard to their wish expressed that they be allowed one of two favors. . . .

The Government makes decision as follows:

(1) Exemption from military service cannot be granted.

(2) All Dukhobor vegetarians, with the exception of those who are now of military age, and who have not completed their military service, will be allowed to leave the borders of Russia on the following conditions:

(a) Obtaining a passport in the regular manner.

(b) Their emigration beyond the borders of Russia be at their own expense.

(c) At their departure, to give a signed statement to the effect that they will never return to the Empire. In the event of non-compliance with this, the guilty party or parties will straightway be exiled to the furthestmost corners of the Empire.

When the Wet Mountain exiles were informed of this conditional release, and also that the government would not insist that all men of military age remain in Russia, so great was their excitement favoring "the faraway place where we will have land and live our lives in peace," that it temporarily submerged the thought of Peter Verigin being left behind in Siberia.

Tolstoy had favored the Dukhobors remaining in Russia where they should be as leaven to the great mass of faltering Christians. In 1897 they had asked his assistance in obtaining permission for migration, and he, in the fall of that year, had written to them a lengthy letter addressed "Beloved brothers, suffering because of Christ's teachings," urging, "not to be obstinate in your refusal of military service . . . and release, in this manner, the wives, children, sick ones, and aged from torment." This letter, the Dukhobors decided among themselves, Tolstoy had deliberately "written in parables to fool the Russian government." Thus it should be taken to mean the opposite to what it said.

But Vladimir Tchertkov, Tolstoy's nominee in England, favored a spectacular exodus. Between representing Tolstoy and the Dukhobors in England, Tchertkov already enjoyed a floodlight of publicity. When he received a telegram from the Christian martyrs: "Permission has been given for our emmigration at our

own expense. We ask for help and guidance," he whipped up a campaign of aid. At first, speaking in the name of Tolstoy, but progressing rapidly to "Tolstoy and myself," he enlisted the help of individuals and groups, among whom Aylmer Maude and the Society of Friends in London (Quakers) were prominent.

Aylmer Maude had been seventeen years in business in Russia and had come to know and admire Leo Tolstoy. Inherently a student, Maude retired from business in 1897, and, returning to England, set himself the task of interpreting Tolstoy to the English-speaking world. Soon after, he became active in the loosely formed Dukhobor aid association, and said of it:

... though volunteer workers sprang up in different places, they had no central organization, no common language, no business manager, and no plan of action. Each helper gave his services voluntarily, and paid his own expenses if he could—if not, the money was scraped together as best might be. Co-operation established itself somehow, not without blunders, mistakes, and even quarrels. People supplied information, made the matter public, offered suggestions, subscribed funds, helped and encouraged one another, and did what they saw their way to do . . .

Tolstoy, though at first not sharing Tchertkov's zeal for the Dukhobor exodus, allowed his name to be used freely with plans for it. Later, when he realized that the Dukhobors were resolved to leave the land of their birth, he issued a pamphlet appealing for guidance and money to assist the migration. In his circular he referred to their "persecutions and sufferings," and the difficulty of addressing the Russian public through the medium of the Russian press.

I trust [he wrote] that the leading authorities of the Russian Government will not prevent such assistance being rendered, and that they will check the excessive zeal of the Caucasian administration, which is, at the present moment, not admitting any communication whatever with the Dukhoborts.

In the meantime, I offer to act as intermediary to all those who are anxious to help the Dukhoborts, and who wish to enter into communication with them, for until the present my communications with them had not been interrupted. My address is Moscow Hamovnicheski, Pereulok. 21.

Communications upon this subject may, for greater safety, be sent to me through the medium of my friend, Vladimir Tchertkov, now living in England, who will be glad to furnish further details,

and the latest information on the subject, in answer to any inquiries addressed to him at Purleigh, Essex.
April 1, 1898.

From his files Tolstoy took his unfinished novel, *Resurrection*, completed it and sold it to raise funds for the exodus, even though to do literary work for money was at that time a compromise with his conscience.

In London, the Society of Friends negotiated with the British government with a view to settling the Dukhobors on the island of Cyprus. Off the southern coast of Turkey and the west coast of Syria, this British-controlled island in the Mediterranean was sparsely inhabited. The British government, however, required a guarantee of \$125 for each Dukhobor, in the event that it might be involved in the care of the immigrants should the island settlement prove a failure.

In response to a request by the aid association, that the Dukhobors should send a delegation to Cyprus to ascertain if the island were suitable, Ivan Ivin and Peter Mahortoff, were permitted to leave from Batum. Funds for their trip to Cyprus were provided by Arnold Eilorart, an eccentric member of a sectarian colony which had a brief existence at Purleigh, Essex, England.

A few weeks later, Ivan Ivin, with his wife and six children, and Peter Mahortoff and his wife, arrived in England to inform the aid association that Cyprus was not a good place because the climate was too hot and the soil sandy. While the aid association of Tolstoyans, Quakers and individual sympathizers, discussed where next to turn for a haven, the Wet Mountain exiles in Georgia Caucasasia began to move, on their own initiative, toward the port of Batum on the Black Sea. Rumors were rife that if they did not leave Russia very quickly, permission would be canceled. Desperately tired of life in the fever-ridden valleys and of the constant pressure of officialdom, they set out for Batum, not knowing how they would leave the port or where they would go. Cyprus was in their minds; they had heard about it, and the conviction grew among them that "Cyprus is the faraway place."

Soon there were more than 1,000 Dukhobors at Batum, camped in warehouse sheds. After sending telegrams to England asking, "What to do?" they chartered a French freighter, with the intention of going to Cyprus.

The Society of Friends persuaded the British government to lower the guarantee to \$75 for each Dukhobor. The "Friends"

then contributed \$50,000; other donations amounted to \$25,000, and the Dukhobors themselves produced more than \$9,000. In all, there was sufficient money for 1,126 Dukhobors to comply with the stipulation of the British government.

In August, 1898, an ill-kempt freighter, her holds full of improvised berths, steamed out of Batum harbor. Ventilation below decks was not adequate, nor were there means of cooking food for so many people. At Larnaca, Cyprus, Arthur St. John welcomed the Dukhobors from the *Durau*.

"I have revived hopes," St. John wrote to the aid association, "of their staying in Cyprus for good, and being a blessing to the island and an instrument of the manifestation of good-will, God's Kingdom on Earth, here in the Old World between Europe and Asia. Who knows? It will be manifested somehow. . . ."

Relieved at escaping from their harsh exile, the Dukhobors set to work in Cyprus—the island which long ago supplied timber for the fleets of the Greek monarchs of Egypt—and built houses from mud bricks. The roofs they made of timber and reeds, throwing on a thick covering of earth to keep out the heat of the sun. At Pergamo and Kuklia, the Cypriate men gazed in wonder at this display of industry so foreign to them.

The two Dukhobor delegates in England continued to assure the aid association that Cyprus was too hot for the brothers and sisters. Becoming convinced there was no land available in England, the delegates turned their hopes to America. They wished to go there, possibly to Canada, to see if the land were good, and if they could have freedom from military service. From the contributions of Arnold Eiloart, there was sufficient money to pay their passage. But the delegates could not go alone! It was too far, and they spoke no English. They asked Aylmer Maude to accompany them as guide. Maude eventually agreed to accompany them, and to pay his own expenses. Then Price Dimitri Hilkov, formerly of the Tsar's army, who had abandoned militarism and given his estates to the peasants, and who for that had been exiled from Russia, volunteered to go.

On September 1, 1898,* Aylmer Maude, Prince Hilkov, the Dukhobor delegates and their wives and the six Ivin children, left Liverpool on the S. S. *Vancouver*, for Canada. September 10,

* From here on dates are in accord with our present-day Gregorian Calendar, instead of the Julian Calendar used in Tsarist Russia which was ten days behind our calendar.

they arrived at Quebec and went on to Montreal, where he called on James Morgan with a letter of introduction. Morgan arranged a meeting with R. B. Angus, a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, who introduced Maude to Thomas Shaughnessy, vice-president of the railway, with the result that railway officials agreed to assist the settlement of the Dukhobors, "somewhere on the Prairie along a C. P. R. line."

It did not matter that many of the prospective settlers were penniless. Hard-working, frugal-living immigrants from Europe were an advantage to the railway companies; they supplied cheap labor for construction and maintenance of lines, their produce and purchases increased freight traffic. Moreover, the C. P. R. had been granted 25,000,000 acres of undeveloped land as an inducement to build a railway from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific.

Bankers in Montreal, mail-order merchants in Toronto, real-estate dealers in Winnipeg, small storekeepers and livery stable proprietors in isolated prairie villages—Canada clamored for immigrants to settle the last West.

The Canadian Pacific Railway Company, as a result of Maude's negotiations, agreed to carry the immigrants from the Atlantic coast to whatever stations west of Winnipeg might be nearest the land eventually selected, at the rate of approximately \$6.00 per adult Dukhobor. To allow them to settle in one large community, as they wished to do, the C. P. R. agreed to let them have the railway company's odd-numbered sections and take in exchange government sections elsewhere.

Maude and his project were enthusiastically received by the Canadian immigration authorities, who were impressed with the "sample" Dukhobors, including the six polite Ivin children. The government, Maude found, would allot 160 acres of prairie sod to each male of eighteen years and over, subject to an entrance fee of \$10 per 160 acres, payment of which could be deferred for three years. Moreover, the government would pay a bonus of \$5.00 "per adult, children counting half," reaching Winnipeg, in good condition, by June 20, 1899, and "a further grant of one dollar and fifty cents for each man, woman and child settled, toward organization and transportation expenses . . ." also, "the use of immigration halls in Manitoba and the Northwest granted during the winter months."

By this agreement "those responsible for the immigration" were to receive more money than was customarily paid by way of bonus

on immigrants. It was usual to pay a bonus of five dollars a head on adult immigrants only. As a rule, bonus money was paid to commercial agents of immigration and steamship companies. But as neither Aylmer Maude nor Prince Hilkov desired monetary profit, it was arranged that the entire sum (which later amounted to about \$35,000) be placed by the government in a special fund to be used to feed the Dukhobors upon their arrival in Canada.

"The Canadian authorities," Maude wrote later, "were quite explicit about the conditions on which the Dukhobors should come to Canada. They were to make entry for the homesteads individually, in the usual Canadian fashion. They would have to supply vital statistics, conform to the laws of the country, and pay their taxes."

In a letter to the aid association in England, and for the benefit of Nikolai Zibaroff and another Dukhobor delegate who had arrived in England from Caucasia, Maude wrote: "Marriages must be registered, i.e., the Government wants to know who is married, to whom and when . . . Education relates not to the Dominion Government, but to the State (Provincial) governments. Till we know in which State (province or territory) they want to settle, nothing can be said about it, except that education is not compulsory in the outlying districts, and no religious instruction is forced on anyone."

Maude wrote of "another concession made in favor of the Dukhobors . . . they were not required to perform, on each separate homestead, the work legally necessary before a homestead may become individual property, but were allowed to do an equivalent quantity of work on any part of the 'township' they took up; thus facilitating their communal arrangements.

"As an inducement for them to come," Maude continued, "it was pointed out that they would have the advantages of the Militia Act, which says—'Every person bearing a certificate from the society of Quakers, Mennonites, or Tunkers, and every inhabitant of Canada of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military duty, who from the doctrines of his religion, is averse to military service, shall be exempt from such service when balloted in time of peace or war, upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Governor-in-Council from time to time prescribes.' " This was later supplemented by an order in council expressly naming the Dukhobors as a sect having the advantage of this act.

Maude and Hilkov made plain these stipulations of entry into

Canada to the two Dukhobor delegates, Ivan Ivin and Peter Mahortoff, and they, as delegates chosen by and acting for the Dukhobors, agreed to them, and agreed that their "brothers and sisters" would obey the Canadian law as set forth to them as delegates.

Tchertkov, other Tolstoyans, and Quakers in England, concerned in the exodus, have acknowledged that the terms of entry into Canada were made plain to the Dukhobor delegates who arrived in England after Ivin and Mahortoff left for Canada.

Later, Maude wrote, and caused to be publicly circulated: "The demands and offers of the Canadian Government were by me communicated to the Dukhobor delegates then in Canada, and also to other delegates who had by then arrived in Purleigh. None of them made any objection, but, on the contrary, all were anxious to hasten the migration as much as possible."

Besides the Dukhobor delegates in Canada and England, the Tolstoyans and Quakers were also well pleased with the arrangement made by Maude, who carried with him this credential from Tchertkov:

Having, in connection with the Dukhobortsi emigration plan, been in correspondence with various persons in America who have expressed sympathy with this cause, and who desire to contribute to its furtherance, I wish to inform them that Aylmer Maude, a personal friend of Leo Tolstoy's and of myself, has very kindly undertaken to go to America with the special object of trying to pave the way for such an emigration.

The success of his efforts will naturally be dependent upon the help he receives, and I should like those who have been in communication upon the subject either with Leo Tolstoy or myself, to know that we have placed the negotiations in America entirely in his (A. Maude's) hands, and request all who may co-operate in this undertaking to regard him as possessing our full and unlimited confidence.

He is accompanied by two delegates from the Dukhobortsi themselves (John Ivin and Peter Mahortoff), who are competent representatives of their brethren in Caucasia.

*Purleigh, Essex, England,
August 31, 1898.*

Among officials of the Canadian government with whom Maude negotiated were, J. A. Smart, deputy minister of the interior, Clifford Sifton, minister of the interior, and W. F. McCreary, commissioner of immigration at Winnipeg.

"I was impressed," Maude wrote, "by their prompt and businesslike common sense, their readiness to meet difficulties, and the absence of official hauteur and dilatoriness."

The C. P. R. issued railway transportation to Maude, Hilkov and the Dukhobor delegates, and the party went more than 2,000 miles northwest to the Edmonton district. There, near Beaver Lake, they selected 276,480 acres (twelve townships of thirty-six square miles each), where the Dukhobors might settle in one contiguous community. Prince Hilkov, a practical agrarian, and the Dukhobor delegates with their instinctive knowledge of land, were greatly pleased.

But soon after they returned to Ottawa, the arrangement was upset. The Conservative party and press opposed the settlement of the Dukhobors near Edmonton. The Dukhobors were represented as being as bad or worse than the "undesirable and troublesome Galician immigrants." Excerpts from dictionaries and "encyclopaedias" appeared in the press testifying that the Dukhobors were a cruel and murderous people, "a fanatical Russian sect, founded in the eighteenth century by a soldier named Procope Loupkin . . . having no stated places of worship."

Such partisan controversy was stirred up, and so aroused did people of the Edmonton district become, that the government advised Maude he must look elsewhere for land. Whereupon Maude observed: "A controversy of that kind in Canada at once becomes a party question. There is practically no broad difference of principle between the Canadian 'Conservative' and 'Liberal' parties. It is chiefly a battle between the 'ins' and the 'outs,' in which various railways and other interests play a part. Consequently, the usual game of the party newspapers is for the 'outs' to attack whatever the 'ins' do . . ."

While Hilkov with Ivin and Mahortoff set out again for the Northwest Territories in search of land, Maude tried to offset the unfavorable publicity the Dukhobors were receiving.

Maude went to Chicago to talk with Jane Addams of Hull House, whom he had known in Moscow where they had discussed Tolstoy's theories of passive resistance. Here, Miss Addams' niece insisted on donating \$200 to help Prince Hilkov, who had exhausted his meager financial resources in the cause of the Dukhobors.

In Philadelphia, among the Quakers, Maude met many sympathizers, some of whom had already contributed to the assistance of the Dukhobors in Caucasia. Active on their behalf was Joseph

S. Elkington of the Society of Friends. In New York he met Ernest Howard Crosby, author, friend of Tolstoy, and ardent sympathizer of the migration.

"Altogether, one of the most surprising and hopeful experiences of my life," wrote Maude, "was the extent and cordiality of the assistance and encouragement rendered to those of us who were concerned in the Doukhobor migration, at this difficult and critical time. It was as though an unseen brotherhood extending from remote Siberia to Caucasia, including dwellers in Moscow, London, and the Essex village from which our party started, and reaching to these great American cities—had suddenly sprung into palpable existence to do a work for which no existing organization was willing to be responsible."

Maude was persuaded to go on a lecture tour, his first, and reaching New York City, from Baltimore, he was met by a battery of newspaper reporters. Prior to his arrival, an enterprising journalist had supplied New York papers with accounts of the Dukhobors, somewhat more fantastic than their history, and considerably less accurate. And now the reporters were not satisfied with Maude's version.

"That's not what we have been saying," said a reporter.

"I know it's not," replied Maude, "but it's the truth."

Another remarked that Maude's version was not very good copy compared to that which his newspaper had already published on the subject.

"You see," said a third, "we don't like denying what we've once said."

One by one the disappointed reporters departed, most of them subsequently demonstrating in the columns of their respective papers that they did not like going back on their own statements.

The following excerpts are from New York papers prior to and after the interview with Maude:

"Four thousand Doukhobors will land on Manhattan Island."

"A Mr. Mode, a wealthy Englishman, who for years has lived with Count Tolstoy, arrived here from Russia yesterday."

"A portion of the ground in Oregon and Washington that has been chosen by Mr. Maude for the colony is now under cultivation."

Another story having to do with an "ukase of Paul I," went on:

"About 15,000 of the Communists were transported . . . In 1860 they got permission to return to Russia, and about 15,000

of them went back. From that day up to a year ago they were driven from one part of Russia to another, never being allowed to remain in one place longer than six months. By that means their numbers have been reduced to 10,000 . . . ”

Reflections of this unashamed journalism appeared in Canadian newspapers, adding to the furore and conflicting reports.

Maude now tried to have the most exaggerated statements contradicted. In this the *Evening Post* co-operated, publishing a lengthy explanation, while the New York *Tribune* commented editorially: “The fate of these people has indeed been a hard one . . . In their own country . . . the Government issued strict instructions that they were not to be written about in the papers; in this country—before they have even reached this continent—they receive publicity enough, but their history, beliefs, present condition and intentions are altogether misrepresented.”

Returning to Ottawa, Maude rejoined Prince Hilkov, who, with the Dukhobor delegates, had selected three blocks of land in the Northwest Territories. Two of the tracts lay north of Yorkton, while the third was between Prince Albert and Saskatoon. These blocks were in the area that was to become part of Saskatchewan when that province was formed six years later.

The Dukhobor delegates, while in Winnipeg, had met two Polish Jews who spoke Russian. These dealers, eager to become agents for the migration, suggested that Prince Hilkov intended to make money by exploiting the immigrants. Ivin and Mahortoff, as confused with their surroundings as the Canadian public was concerning them and their brethren, became suspicious of both Hilkov and Maude. They ceased to behave as delegates, going so far as to deny they had been delegates. They quibbled and behaved toward Hilkov as they might have to a tax collector in Caucasia.

“It is not right,” they said, “that one or two men among us should decide anything.”

Maude reminded them that their purpose in Canada was to decide for their brothers in Caucasia, that was why the brothers had sent them. How could 7,000 persons be brought to Canada without settled plans as to where they were to go and how they should be provided for?

“*Ya neznao*, I don’t know,” Mahortoff answered.

Ivin and Mahortoff were also suspicious that a move was being made to separate the brothers when they came to Canada, and that was why the land was to be in three separate blocks, one of which was three hundred miles distant from the other two. They

would not be convinced that there was not enough good land in one block available for homestead settlement.

Maude, who had known no Dukhobors until this venture, began to doubt that they were "wise, reasonable men, considerate of others and easy to get on with . . . a folk who had well nigh realized the Christian ideal; and that it is incumbent on us not merely to sympathize and help them, but also to assimilate our own lives and customs to theirs, as much as our own inferior development would allow . . ."

The Dukhobors in Caucasia continued sending urgent entreaties that arrangements be made as quickly as possible.

"The Canadian Government," Maude wrote, "on its side, naturally wanted some responsible person to treat with; and thus the curious result was arrived at: that Hilkov and I had, unwillingly, to accept the role and responsibility of plenipotentiaries for people whom I, at least, knew little of, and whose 'delegates' more or less distrusted us both."

Maude cabled to the aid association in England, "Let exiles come. Land ready." The message was relayed to Caucasia.

He went to Boston to see William Lloyd Garrison, "worthy son of a noble father," and from there returned to England. Prince Hilkov stayed in Canada to await the first settlers.

Meanwhile, at Batum, the Black Sea port from where the railway winds inland through Georgian Caucasia to Tiflis, Leo Sulerjitski awaited the first trainload of Dukhobors bound for Canada. Sulerjitski—energetic, brilliant of intellect, whimsical, not readily predictable; inclined to anarchism, pacifism, philanthropy and fascinating women—had volunteered to accompany the Dukhobors to Canada. Leo Tolstoy's son, Sergei, who had been in England to confer with the aid association, joined Sulerjitski at Batum. After telegrams back and forth, the *Lake Huron*, Beaver Line freighter, was engaged at Liverpool.

According to Sulerjitski's bookkeeping, the cash outlay—not including food—required to move the first party of 2,140 men, women and children from Georgian Caucasia to the Northwest Territories, north of Yorkton, was \$40,100—less than \$18 a head for the journey of 7,000 miles by water and land. The Dukhobors took their own food aboard the ship.

The main items of expense were:

\$14,000—to be paid the owners of the *Lake Huron* before the ship left Liverpool.

- \$14,000—to be paid the owners when the *Lake Huron*
docked at Batum.
1,000—when she should deliver her cargo at St. John,
Canada.
500—railway fare to Batum.
600—lumber to go into the ship's holds for berths.
10,000—railway fare in Canada from St. John to the
Northwest Territories.

\$40,100—Total.

This sum came eventually from the following sources :

- \$17,100—Leo Tolstoy.
5,100—Purleigh Colony, Essex.
1,400—Society of Friends, London. (These Quakers had
guaranteed up to \$12,000 from their funds if re-
quired.)
16,500—from the Dukhobors themselves.

\$40,100—Total.

Sulerjitski became nominal owner of the *Lake Huron*, for the duration of the voyage, thus relieving the owners of responsibility for the freighter's human cargo.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EXODUS

ON DECEMBER 6, 1898, Leopold Sulerjitski, Sergei Tolstoy and the English vice-consul, met the first train of five hundred and sixty Dukhobors to arrive in Batum.

"They look like Cossack *automans* on expedition," said Sulerjitski to Sergei, as the men in their high sheepskin hats and flowing beshmets peered from the open doors of the railway cars.

The engine shunted the cars into a spur track of Reichter's oil refinery. Reichter, a German, had offered his sheds, free of charge, to shelter the people until their ship should reach Batum. Climbing from the cars, men, women and children bowed to the reception committee. As spokesman, Vasa Popoff lifted his red-top sheepskin hat high above his head. "Sdorovo jevotte, it is hoped you are in good health," he said, bowing from the waist.

Sulerjitski, had he been a Dukhobor, would have known the proper reply to be, "Slava Bohu, and how are you yourselves?" But Sulerjitski did not know this, and Vasa Popoff, unperturbed, continued the ceremony to the end.

The heads of the women were draped in white, yellow and red shawls in accord with Peter Verigin's advice that they abandon their round helmet caps for shawls tied beneath their chins.

"He does not know the Christian greeting," whispered a grandmother to a sister who stood eying Sulerjitski, her hands clasped over an expansive stomach.

"Nyet, but he looks like a nice man."

"I hope he knows how to guide the boat so that we will not be drowned in the ocean."

Sulerjitski asked Vasa, "Who are the other leaders, so that I may explain the arrangements?"

"We have no leaders," Vasa said. "We are all equal. No one among us is greater. People think I am a leader because I have a red top to my hat. That is not so. But sometimes the brothers elect me as their spokesman, and I could make known your message to them," he smiled.

Soon all but the smallest children were unloading baggage from the cars, carrying it into the sheds; immense ironbound boxes,

barrels, bales and pails. Two laughing girls carried a box between them. An old man bent under a wicker basket. Everyone was busy, in holiday bustle. Like a conveyor belt they worked, one line coming heavily loaded, the other line returning for another load. When everything was stored in the sheds, women set up cooking tripods outside and slung their copper pots, while children gathered chips to make fires. Others prepared potatoes and rice.

The next day, trains brought the rest of the Wet Mountain exiles. Outside, gray fog driving in from the sea obscured the ships in the harbor. Then came rain, and it fell for days in a gusty wind which rattled the sheet-metal roof and slapped the canvas in front of the sheds like sails in a storm. Woollen bourkas and blankets were damp; at nights the Dukhobors slept fitfully. Fires smoked and smoldered, or did not burn at all; to cook food was almost impossible. Fever and diarrhea added to the misery. The Batum health officer found several cases of scarlet fever and isolated them.

Even the cheerful Sulerjitski felt depressed with the rain-laden wind which "moaned and tore through the immense shed as if trying to get its cold, soulless fingers between the huddled forms."

A Dukhobor approached Sulerjitski, saying he must speak with him alone. The man was hesitant, and talked at length about his wife, explaining how they had married some years ago. She was a very good wife. "But life is not always within our control." Yet, he was not to blame "for what has happened," nor was she to blame. Eventually he confided that his wife was pregnant and due to give birth that day. It was desirable that she have a place apart from the others. He was ashamed of his weakness; it was not right for a Dukhobor to be together with his wife in a way which brought children.

Sulerjitski, promising to find a place for her, asked, "Why is it not right?"

"Well, you see it is like this. It is not right at this time."

"But why? Who told you it was not right?"

"No one told us. We decided among ourselves about three and a half years ago, before we decided to burn our guns. Possibly God knew that we would be in exile and then on a long journey like now; and little children would suffer in the harsh life, and that is why it was His will that we have no small ones with us."

On December 17, the *Lake Huron* steamed into the dock, and Sulerjitski went aboard to meet Captain Evans. Soon he had the Dukhobor men organized into two shifts, each of a hundred, to

work throughout twenty-four hours, building berths in the freight holds. Thirty-six hours later, the berths made, a number of Dukhobors were earning one ruble and thirty kopeks a shift, coaling ship. After it was washed clean of coal dust, they carried boxes, bales and barrels down to the lower holds, a procedure protested by women who wanted to have all their belongings with them.

Sulerjitski, seeing a number of bales, kegs, pails and boxes, besides two enormous trunks, still on the dock, asked the woman standing beside them, "For how many people is all this baggage?"

"For four of us. And why do you ask?" replied the woman.

"I have already told you," he explained, "that you are to take as little as possible to your beds. Just your dishes, bedding, and two changes of clothing. Everything else must be stored in the bottom of the ship, else there will be no room for everyone. Remember, every week you will be allowed to see your trunks, so that you will know they are still there."

"There is not much here," said the woman, sniffing. "Look at it, it seems to me there is hardly anything for four persons. Without my trunks with me, I cannot live . . . they will get lost. . . ." She began weeping.

"What have you got in there?"

"Well, teadishes and bowls."

"You need as many dishes as that for four people?"

"Da, yes, we do. There is besides, thread, needles, mending patches, soap, three changes of clothing and the death clothes."

"Take out your dishes and two changes of clothing," he ordered. "And hurry! Everything else goes in the lower holds."

"But you let Razanoffs keep more than us."

"Razanoffs have twenty-one in their family."

"All right then," bending to get out her dishes. "But be careful with these boxes, because I heard our sisters say the poor trunks are sometimes dropped so hard they knock together and break open like nuts."

The Dukhobors had asked permission to group themselves in the ship according to the villages from which they came. Until midnight the embarkation went on successfully, but after that the passageways began to fill up, those at the rear pushing to get through, and the passengers ahead shouting, "Hold back, there is no room." Yet the ship was only half filled, and 1,000 more had to be accommodated.

Sulerjitski got around by another companionway, to find men, women, children and bales blocking the procession. They attacked

him with questions: "We are lost. . . . How can we get through? Where shall we put ourselves? . . . We are Orlovka people. . . . Our elders said, 'As soon as you enter, go to your left,' but the people from Tombovka and Efremovka . . . Such trouble is upon us. . . ."

Sulerjitski saw that his carefully laid plans, whereby each family was to have found its own berths, were now hopelessly confused. He ordered everyone to take the nearest empty berths. But many standing by unoccupied berths insisted on "finding our own places." Eventually the passageways became clear of people and baggage, and the last hold was apparently filled. Yet, there were still a hundred and fifty persons on the dock. Again Sulerjitski went through the ship and a glance disclosed the trouble. Some were sleeping lengthwise when they should have been in rows with their heads toward the ship's side; others slept diagonally. Some had pails, tubs and even barrels in bed with them. It was necessary to awaken them, and when it was explained that a hundred and fifty of the brothers and sisters were still on the dock, those who first wakened shook their neighbors, and the process of straightening out, stowing baggage, was resumed amidst sighing and chattering.

"Da, make room for all the brothers and sisters," said an old lady. "My, my, how much suffering there is! Never mind, this is the last, if God wills."

"Wake up! *Ponemish*, understand that everyone is moving," said a woman, shaking an old man by his shoulder.

Dedushka moved over, straightening himself in his berth, grumbling half to himself about "violence and force . . . is it to follow us all the way to Canada?"

It was eight o'clock in the morning before all were aboard. The winches snorted and clanged, loading the last sacks of flour. Black smoke came from the freighter's funnels; the ship's engines, warming up, rumbled a few revolutions and stopped again.

Up the gangway, his buttons shining in the sunlight, came the chief of police of Batum. While he made himself comfortable at a table covered with papers, all the Dukhobors left the ship to assemble apprehensively on the dock. Policemen searched from bilges to the bridge, looking for fugitive revolutionaries, labor agitators and Russian citizens who might be attempting to leave the country without permission. They found no one.

The Dukhobors filed on board again, past the chief of police and his aides, who scrutinized their permits to leave Russia, on

condition they never return to the empire. Two doctors examined them for contagious diseases. A Razanoff daughter had scarlet fever; she, with the whole family had to remain on the dock.

The father begged to be allowed to return to the ship. His eyes flashed hate at Sulerjitski as he said, "This is all because of *you*."

Sulerjitski tried to assure him there would be another ship leaving Batum within seven days, but old Razanoff shook his head in doubt.

Captain Evans, in the wheelhouse, rang the engine-room telegraph. The whistle blew, white ribbons of steam darting alongside the smoke billowing from the funnel. The green water churned astern, and the ship moved from shore.

Spontaneously, yet altogether as if by prearrangement, the Dukhobors began a psalm in song. Like collective sobbing from a human organ of 2,000 reeds, the melancholy cadences rose and fell. When the singing stopped, the sounds of Batum were left behind. The purpling hills were fading. Around the ship was a growing expanse of dark-blue water. Above the masts in the sun's warm rays white gulls wheeled and cried. To their unprecedented journey in this "great iron box" on the ocean and to the unknown land ahead of them, the Dukhobors turned their thoughts.

The *Lake Huron*, to reduce expense, carried only a skeleton crew of regular sailors, and now Captain Evans' practiced eyes selected ninety-four Dukhobors to supplement his nucleus of able seamen.

Twenty were organized as water carriers from the fresh-water cistern to the kitchen; mornings and evenings they would carry hot food throughout the ship. There were six guards for the two fresh-water taps, their duty being to make certain that no one took fresh water, other than those authorized, and to see that there was no leakage, nor waste. Two men must be responsible for lanterns, three for supplying sea water for washing. Nine were chosen bakers to work three shifts of three men each; two men constantly mixing dough, while an extra man was detailed to each shift as fireman for the ovens. Twelve men were made responsible for provisions and stores. Twelve more would tend the lavatories.

Thirty of the ablest would work with the regular sailors, washing decks, regulating ventilation, checking fire apparatus, and standing by during stormy weather to secure the deckload. The thirty Dukhobor sailors listened carefully to their instructions, and asked many questions. At first, they seemed unable to under-

stand that orders must be carried out at a run—no leisurely walking away such as in the hayfield. With patient good humor, Sulerjitski explained that sometimes things on a ship must be done in a hurry, otherwise everyone might be drowned. It was not like on dry land; the wind and the sea waited for no man.

On the second day, toward evening, as the Dukhobor sailors were beginning to grasp the idea, a fresh wind developed into a small gale. The waves grew larger and the freighter rolled. Darkness overtook the Dukhobor sailors who had difficulty staying on their feet; they grabbed the rail, or hung onto one another as the ship rolled. A heavy barrel broke loose, knocking one man down and rolling past him to the rail. He got to his feet. The ship rolled the other way. The barrel chased him as if it were a live thing. Halfway across the deck he turned, stood his ground, reached out to stop it, but it reversed and rolled away from him with more alacrity than ever. Three more Dukhobors joined this barrel wrestling. Following the monster to the rail, they struggled with it to its place in the deckload.

"Slava Bohu!" said one, with heaving breath.

"Skoro, quickly, tie it up; already it is trying to come alive again!"

Some Dukhobors became seasick, and by morning the majority were unable to leave their berths. The ship creaked and strained. The passengers strained and groaned. Old folk shook their heads, predicting the end. A few drank their tea, most of them would not look at food.

"What matters now, we will never see land again."

At Constantinople everyone who felt well enough wanted to go ashore. They could not understand that the Turkish government would not allow them to "walk on the land even long enough so our feet will feel all right again."

At the dock was Nikolai Zibaroff, one of the last Dukhobor delegates to England. He had come with the *Lake Huron* as far as Constantinople, as, had he gone on to Batum, he would have broken his agreement with the Russian government, "never to return." His wizened old mother kissed him as he came on deck, and the others, pleased to see him, asked many questions. Here too, the Russian doctor, Alexi Ilich Bakunin, and Nurse Sasha Satz, joined the ship.

December 26, the *Lake Huron* steamed into the Dardanelles. So quiet and warm was the island-studded Aegean Sea, that many Dukhobors slept on deck. "Life on the floating village" became

pleasant, but the enjoyment was marred by news from the ship's hospital. Gresha, a ten-year-old boy, had a mouth infection which Doctor Bakunin and the English Doctor Mercer diagnosed as "water cancer." The boy's swollen throat gurgled as he struggled for breath, and the doctors could do little else than ease his pain with injections of ether. He died early in the morning.

The father was agitated when he learned that the body would be lowered into the sea. He himself reluctantly sewed up the corpse in a thin linen sheet, placed a weight of scrap iron from the engine room at its feet, then wrapped it in canvas.

The Dukhobors prepared for the burial service amidst much discussion concerning this unprecedented event of "burying a body in water." They had no psalm for such an occasion and they thought the ship should go to land where Gresha could be buried in the Christian way. Sulerjitski explained that it was customary to bury everyone at sea who died on it. It was considered such a good way that many sailors who died on land had left requests to be buried at sea. The Dukhobors shook their heads, and even when all had assembled on deck for the ceremony, the father of the boy pointed once more to the land.

"See there," he pleaded, "it is not far away."

Sulerjitski explained that the ship might be damaged by going to shore where there was no harbor; then all might lose their lives. And the living would be endangered if the corpse were kept until the ship reached Canada.

A doleful, melancholy psalm issued from the choir, drowning the sobs of the women. Over the rail, cutting through the smooth blue water, a school of dolphins fascinated a small boy. The singing stopped. He pulled his grandfather's sleeve.

"Dedushka! Grandfather! Look!" the lad shouted. "When he is put in there will the fish eat him?"

"Teshush, enough of questions."

The singing resumed, and when it ceased again, the ship's engines stopped. A last prayer was said. The father and mother kissed the gray canvas bundle, resignedly passing it to Sulerjitski.

The assemblage watched Sulerjitski lean over the ship's side, open his hands and let the body fall to the water. The bundle became blue in the water, and sank from sight.

Throughout three days' fine weather on the Mediterranean the women washed clothes on deck, the splash of water in wooden

buckets and the drubbing of clothes mingling with cheerful gossip of wives and young girls. The mast of the *Lake Huron* fluttered with clothes of many colors. Some hundred boys and girls finished scraping weathered paint from the boiler and engine-room hatches and assembled at the galley for buns and orange marmalade. One after another, no hurrying or pushing, they came to Nurse Satz, who was impressed with their politeness, each child bowing in turn and saying, "Spasi Hospodi. Thank the Lord," and going away with their noses in the marmalade. There was no quarreling, nor did anyone who had received his or her share try to get in line a second time. The only failure of the feast was that one boy's leather-peaked cap fell into the sea while he was bowing and thanking the Lord.

Old Mahortoff, through these warm days wore his fur cap as usual, and at times his sheepskin overcoat. It was the middle of winter, he said. He had always worn winter clothes in winter. Eighty years of age, his beard whiter and longer than ever, he walked about the ship with head erect, encouraging here, bantering there. He had been on the ocean before. Da, yes, in the days of Nikolai I, he had been on a ship of the Tsar. "Um, yes, this is the ocean, different ways of doing things," he agreed with Sulerjitski. "Not the same as on land. Necessary to obey orders quickly before everyone gets drowned. Pravda!"

From the older boys, Doctor Mercer, one of the two English doctors, took lessons in Russian. In this experiment the boys learned English words from the doctor. Mercer was popular with crew and passengers, but the Dukhobors did not like his aide, the "tall red-headed Englishman who treats us roughly." Thus the "other English doctor" was told by Sulerjitski to stay entirely away from the patients, after which he spent much of his time drinking whisky in his cabin, coming up on deck in the evenings and looking sullenly out to sea, pipe clenched between his teeth.

Past Gibraltar, on the open Atlantic, the air became cooler, while an ominous line of dark clouds stretched across the western horizon. Captain Evans did not like the way the barometer was behaving. The captain's apprehension was confirmed when the first violent gust of cold wind, striking the ship head on, howled through the rigging. The water darkened with the sky, while the wind, rapidly increasing to a gale, scattered white foam from the crests of the waves. It whirled over the deck, rattling the ropes against the masts, howled in the companionways; it tore a strip

of canvas from one of the extra ventilators installed to supplement the regular iron ventilators so vitally necessary to carry fresh air down to the passengers in the lower holds.

Throughout eight days the head-on gale raged, heavy seas breaking over the decks so that the ventilators for the forward holds had to be turned about-face to save the seasick passengers from drowning in their berths. The shuddering freighter barely held her own. She struggled up the side of an enormous wave, momentarily balanced on the crest, propeller out of the water, engines racing, trembling as a nervous animal; then she plunged down the other side, rising from the trough with anchors rattling and bow awash.

In the forward holds, the sickly oil lamps went out because of not enough air. The ventilators on deck had to be turned partly toward the gale to prevent the people from suffocating. Soon there were six inches of water swishing in the hold. Along the metal bulkhead were beads of moisture condensed from human breath.

The holds reeked. The depleted Dukhobor crew carried pails of human bilge from below decks. Sixty persons were helpless, while hundreds were unable to attend to their most primitive needs. For the worst cases of convulsive stomachs the doctors gave hypodermic injections, lest the sufferers exhaust themselves beyond possibility of recovery.

On the bridge, Captain Evans himself was worried, his lips compressed, his tired gray eyes red-rimmed from lack of sleep. Doctors Bakunin and Mercer, with Nurse Satz, had had little sleep for days. Their work was increased by accidents. Two men fell down a companionway, each breaking a rib; a girl was thrown against a winch; a boy trying to carry hot water fell and scalded himself. A baby was born.

Groans, sighs and spasms of vomiting came from the rows of berths in the frowzy holds. Those still able to speak lamented and made mournful prophecies.

"We will see one another in death," moaned a woman closing her eyes like a stunned hen and swaying her head from side to side.

"We will never reach land, it is all over," said another.

And Chernenkoff, known for his cheerfulness and trust in God, said, "Is it possible that we shall see the end of this? Look what is happening to me." His neck stretched convulsively again.

"Ach, more bile, and in a week I haven't eaten as much as one sunflower seed."

Some muttered incantations while many of the aged made their peace with God. The few who attended the ninth burial service were full of despair. While members of the regular crew carried the corpse along the pitching deck, several close relatives clung precariously to the rail. Salt spray and wild gusts of wind tore the burial psalm from their mouths.

So dangerously low did the morale of the passengers become, that Sulerjitski sought for an explanation besides that of seasickness, and Zibaroff confided the fear which engulfed them. Everyone was convinced, he said, that the ship was lost. Even the captain did not know his way out of this eternal area of storm. The lost ship would eventually sink and all would be drowned, if everyone did not die of seasickness before. Anyway, there was no hope left.

Sulerjitski went through the holds and found belief in catastrophe widespread and persistent. The women were most certain. They told him that he knew the ship was lost, but that he was trying to conceal it.

"Tell me," he asked one emphatic old woman, "why are you so sure the ship is lost?"

"Well," she answered with a triumphant and cunning look, "you can see for yourself. Now you tell me—where does the sun rise? At first, when we started, the sun rose on this side of the ship." She pointed. "And after, when we could see it, before this storm began,"—pointing with a shaking finger—"it rose on that side!"

An old man, whose anger rose in spite of his misery, added, "While we moved along in sight of land, we knew our way. Now there is no shore of any kind. Tak. Who among us can tell the end or the beginning? It is terrible, terrible."

Sulerjitski explained to several elders that the storm was very great and very long. That was all. When the ship had been traveling southward through the Aegean Sea, the western sun shone on its starboard side; now, when the ship was headed northwest, the same sun shone on the port side. The elders were noncommittal. Those who had watches said the "time" had long ceased to agree with that of the sun. Sulerjitski's explanations might only be clever tricks. Who could tell?

With old Mahortoff, Sulerjitski had success. Mahortoff agreed to reassure the brothers and sisters. With fur cap on his head,

a stick in each hand and the added support of two sailors, he toured the pitching ship.

"Da, I am an old sailor," he roared for all to hear. "I have checked the way, I tell you. We are on the right track. The ship is not lost. Soon this storm will be over, and it is not like good Christians to have such little faith . . . not like good Christians."

Those who had enough energy left felt encouraged by Mahortoff's voice and bearing. A good day's work accomplished, sailors supported Mahortoff back to his cabin which his venerable age allowed him to share with Grandfather Bokoff.

By January 21, the gale had spent its force, and the sun breaking through the clouds shone down on the deck glistening with salt. The children were first to recover and ask for food. Then men and women emerged from the semidarkness of the holds, to bask in the almost forgotten sun, and enjoy their soup for the first time in days. Those who had strength walked about the deck, visiting their friends. The Dukhobor crew, almost recovered, took advantage of three days fine weather to scrub the ship with naval thoroughness.

On January 24, after a voyage of thirty-two days, the *Lake Huron* was in sight of Halifax. She had brought the largest number of passengers ever to have embarked on one ship for permanent settlement on the North American continent. The next morning, when Doctor Montizambert, of the health service, inspected the holds he remarked that he had never seen a ship enter a harbor in such surprisingly clean and orderly condition. A freighter at that!

Prince Hilkov came on deck with two Quakers, Joseph S. Elkington, of the Philadelphia Society of Friends, and Job S. Gidley of North Dartmouth, Mass. James A. Smart, Canadian deputy minister of the interior; J. T. Bulmer, delegate from a labor organization; reporters from the *Halifax Morning Chronicle*, *St. John Daily Star*, *Montreal Daily Star*, and other newspapers followed up the gangway.

The Dukhobors, dressed in their best clean clothes, assembled on deck as they would for a religious ceremony. They were especially interested in their benefactors, the Quakers "with hats like stovepipes, and one with the bald head like a polished knee."

Prince Hilkov announced that the Quakers wished to pray to the Lord in thanksgiving for their safe arrival.

The Dukhobor men removed their sheepskin hats. Joseph Elk-

ington closed his eyes, moistened his lips, and with a firm voice began a prayer. Occasionally he stressed a word, opening his eyes and looking over his glasses; twice he knelt on one knee. The Dukhobors, who understood the word "good" whenever they heard it in the prayer, were impressed by the Quaker's good intentions, but were inwardly astounded by his strange ceremony and "unchristian clothes."

Prince Hilkov translated the prayer of thanksgiving and blessing, explaining that it was on behalf of all the Quakers in America.

Vasa Popoff, as spokesman for the Dukhobors, stepped forward, bowed and said, "May God bless them for their kind words and deeds. May the Lord never forsake them. Slava Bohu!"

Hilkov then explained in English that the Dukhobors would sing a psalm by way of returning the prayer. The visitors, who had not before heard a Dukhobor psalm, were impressed and fascinated by the singular melody and so many voices.

Then J. T. Bulmer, the labor delegate, fervently addressed the Dukhobors in English. Waving his arms, he commended the immigrants for their noble stand in refusing military service in Russia, even though they would enter "the new world through a port studded with cannon." He did not know the name of the Tsar of Russia, but he knew of "your patron and friend, Count Tolstoy . . . On behalf of the peaceful workingmen of this country, I welcome you to Canada, and bid you Godspeed."

The Dukhobors, overcome with the warmth and sincerity they felt in this speech, knelt as one on the deck, and touched their foreheads to it.

Astonished and somewhat dismayed, the Quakers stood speechless. Bulmer looked on with his mouth open. The reporters, like puzzled roosters, with heads first to one side and then the other, wrote rapidly in their notebooks. Dr. Mercer's face flushed. He had spoken highly of the Dukhobors, and now he felt, vaguely that the Dukhobors were prostrating themselves in fawning servility. Even Captain Evans who had seen many sights on many shores, opened his eyes wide, and stopped chewing his tobacco.

The Dukhobors lifted their foreheads from the deck and rose to their feet. Their poise further baffled the spectators. No one said anything aloud, but as a result of a whispered discussion amongst the Dukhobors, Vasa Popoff said to Prince Hilkov, "Dimitri Alexandrovich, please tell the Englishmen that we did not bow to them, even though they may think so. We bowed to

the Spirit of God in their hearts, which made them take us unto themselves as brothers in their own homeland of Canada." Vasa bowed from his waist.

Prince Hilkov translated the explanation. The elder Quaker's face wrinkled into a benevolent smile. Grasping Vasa's hand, he shook it vigorously, saying "Very good, we understand."

The following day, as the *Lake Huron* steamed toward St. John, the Dukhobors discussed this strange country, Canada, "where no policemen come to meet you, and the government doctor does not have gold braid on his uniform . . . and a Frenchman is the governor . . . but the Englishmen do not mind, because they asked the man Laurier to be the governor . . . and it is said there are no soldiers in the governor's palace . . . Pravda? . . . Vasili says that in England lives the Queen Victoria, who will not take us away to fight in an army . . . she wishes us to have our own ceremonies before God, because that is our own business. Pravda?"

Five young men, all of whom had been sailors on the voyage, insisted that they be allowed to marry five young women who were as eager as themselves. After much argument and many misgivings on the part of the old folk who doubted that Petushka would approve, the parents consented to the ceremony which was performed on deck.

It was evening when the ship reached St. John. The dock was crowded with people shouting a welcome. The Dukhobors immediately responded by singing a psalm.

Vasa Popoff was first down the gangplank, his immense frame carrying the heavy bale on his back with apparent ease.

"Look at the size of him . . ." the Canadians said. "He doesn't look like a good-for-nothing. . . . Look, he's bowing to us . . . good sport. . . ."

When a woman came down the gangplank carrying an enormous bale with the greatest of ease, an Englishwoman squealed in amazement. The bundle contained feather beds.

In a warehouse, between the dock and the trains, were barrels filled with bags of candies sent by Montreal women. The children accepted these gifts, bowing seriously, and moving on toward the colonist coaches without giving the women the satisfaction of seeing the bags opened.

Smart, the deputy minister of the interior, with a feeling of satisfaction concerning this immigration project, waited through

the night until the fifth and last train was moving westward to Winnipeg.

En route, the Dukhobors had much to discuss.

"Smart, the government official, without gold braid . . . yet a more important man than Governor Nakashidze . . . he bowed to us . . . he had no Cossacks . . . his eyes are very kind. . . ."

"Look out of the window, so much snow and rocks, how could anyone grow anything on it? . . . It is not necessary to try, we are going to good land without any rocks. . . ."

At stations, "Look there are more of those *Anglichani* with their fur coats on inside out, such ways of doing things. . . ."

And the "Englishmen" observing at the same time: "Those Russians, Dook-ho-bors, wearing their coats inside out with the bare hide on the outside. . . ."

Dukhobors: "Englishmen chewing tobacco and spoiling the white snow, spitting brown patches in it. . . ."

Canadians: "Why don't they shave off those mustaches which make them look like walruses. . . ."

Dukhobors: "Are they Christians?"

Canadians: "Are they Christians?"

The fat man with the red neck and blue uniform, brass buttons and peaked cap, looked at his gold watch, raised his other arm and shouted, "B-o-a-r-d." The engine blew two short blasts and the train moved on, gray clouds of smoke flowing past the windows.

In the colonist coaches it was warm, each with two coal stoves. The Dukhobors praised the white bread and Canadian cheese which had been bought for them with their government bonus money. Outside it was thirty below zero with a sharp wind drifting the snow, forcing the train to go slower. Once the engine was uncoupled and ran ahead of the train, bucking its way through a snow bank, to return later for the coaches. The Dukhobors almost concluded that Canada was a Christian country, but Nikolai Zibaroff warned, "We shall see later what to expect."

In Winnipeg and Brandon they lived in the immigration halls, waiting for spring, when they would see their "new land."

CHAPTER TWELVE

PRAIRIE SETTLEMENT

WHEN PETER VERIGIN heard that the first shipload of his followers had left for Canada, he resigned himself to advising those yet to leave how they should live their lives in Canada.

In a letter to his father and mother—his father died about this time; his mother boarded the last ship to leave Caucasia, in the spring of 1899—"and to all the brothers and sisters," he acknowledged receipt of his parents' letter of November 27, 1898, "with thirty rubles enclosed, for which I sincerely thank you, and may the Lord thank you with eternal life for your remembrances and good wishes. I am well and in good health. Slava Bohu. . . ."

Concerning the migration, I am told that education is absolutely compulsory in North America. That is for the best, because simple literacy is necessary as an aid to life; for example, so that one should know how to read and write. One must not understand that literacy will positively enlighten a man, yet again I repeat it can only be an aid, and a person reading books may gather information; and in such manner his mind may become developed. In general, I think if God wishes that our people should establish themselves in America, then simple literacy (reading, writing and arithmetic) is absolutely necessary . . .

Your life in Canada should in my opinion, be on communal foundation; that is, the absolute necessities like cattle, plows, and other implements as well as granaries and storehouses, grist mills, oil presses, blacksmithshops and woodworking shops, all these in the first years must be built by communal effort; every village commune must be equipped in this manner.

Do not settle in big villages. The biggest village must not have more than fifty families. The villages must be built on the customary plan that you so well know, the average size of homes built to hold one family each ["one family" consisted of three and sometimes four generations]; the streets must be wide. If you should happen to settle in a forest, if it so happens that you should place a village in a forest, then the trees surrounding the village must not be cut; on the other hand if you happen to settle on treeless land, then at first opportunity the village streets must be lined with trees, and if the

climate allows, plant fruit trees; and in general you should have shrubbery for wind-breaks.

I embrace you my dear father and mother and send every one in Caucasia a soul-felt regard.

Your son and brother in Christ,

PETER

In his letters to his parents, Peter had ceased mention of his son Peter Petrovich Verigin, and Dunia the mother. Previously, in 1896, he had, perhaps with a desire to erase the divorce from his conscience, requested his parents to arrange that Dunia and Peter visit him. But Dunia's people opposed the idea, and Peter's parents, wishing not to hurt his feelings, wrote to him that the authorities would not permit Dunia to travel to Obdorsk. "Tak," wrote Peter in reply, "do not trouble yourselves excessively. If God wills, we will see each other; eternal life is long, only one must believe in the soul's immortality . . ."

When writing of his son and Dunia to the Tolstoyans and other non-Dukhobors with whom he corresponded, Peter studiously avoided mention of his divorce, or that he had left Dunia to go to Lukeria in the Wet Mountains.

In a letter to the Tolstoyan, Evgeni Ivanovich Papov, he wrote of his "closest relatives . . . my wife and son. When I was preparing for exile . . . she was very cool to me, or to be more correct, was afraid. Her father was completely antagonistic to me, he remained in the party which did not join our movement. We, my young wife and I, decided that she should remain with her father and bring up our son. I left her with the necessary means for this. The boy was two years old at that time. Then in 1884 I moved from Elizetvopolsk province to the district of Achkalkalask (Wet Mountains) and worked there, because the center of administration of all our Dukhobor districts was there. In 1886, I was exiled. Now the boy is twelve years old. In the city of Elizetvopolsk is a technical school and he studied there. Now he is in a class of practical trade. I carry on a correspondence with my wife and we hope eventually to meet one another. When the boy becomes of age, she would then come to me. The son writes to me himself. I had asked Ivan Mikhaeliovich [I. M. Tregubov, the Tolstoyan] to send some books to Elizetvopolsk for him. I also ask you, if it is possible, to send him books suitable for his age. The subject of these books must be on 'Christian morality.' Address: Peter Petrovich Verigin, Trade School, Elizetvopol."

According to available records, Peter, in his letters from exile, avoided direct reference to Lukeria Kalmikova, the woman who made him ruler. He did, however, in a letter to Izumchenkov, a Tolstoyan in exile, refer to the Dukhobors supplying horse transport for the Russian army during the war against Turkey "as the most abominable act in the history of the Dukhobors . . . It has been brought to general attention in the newspapers that our people helped the Russian army. To take part in any evil cause is not right . . . the person in authority [Lukeria] was sympathetic, explaining that it was impossible fully to carry out the teachings of Christ. *We* at this moment protest against such an explanation and say it is hypocrisy because as far as possible one must live his life in accord with what he thinks and says."

In this manner Peter disposed of the memory of Lukeria, "the person in authority" who had adopted him as her child, mate and deity, making it possible for him to play at Jesus Christ. Conveniently now, he forgot that she had asked his advice concerning the transport, and he had then replied that she should do as she thought best.

Peter Vasilivich Verigin continued in Siberian exile, because the authorities would not grant him permission to join the exodus. His son, Peter Petrovich Verigin, remained in Caucasia because he belonged to the "bad brothers" who had no intention of leaving Russia with the "mad brothers."

The second shipload of 2,300 Dukhobors left Batum on the *Lake Superior*, December 29, 1898, a week after the *Lake Huron*. The freighter was less than a month on the ocean, reaching St. John, January 27, and standing there in quarantine. In charge of this shipment—1,600 of whom were from Elizetvolsk province and 700 from Kars province—was Sergei Tolstoy, second son of Leo Tolstoy.

In the spring of 1899, the *Lake Superior*, returning to the Mediterranean, called at Cyprus to take aboard 1,000 Dukhobors (of the remainder on the island, about a hundred died during the six months there). The freighter left Cyprus with her human cargo on April 27, and after a voyage of twenty-six days—during which time there was an even score of one birth, one death—reached Quebec, May 10. Accompanying the Dukhobors aboard this ship were: Arthur St. John, the English retired army officer who had been banished from Russia and who had gone to Cyprus to prepare for what was thought would be a permanent settlement there; William Bellows, son of John Bellows; Anna de

Carousa, idealist and admirer of the Dukhobors; Nurse Rabetz, and Leo Sulerjitski who had temporarily left the settlement in Canada to take charge of this shipload.

The fourth, last and largest shipload, of more than 2,300 persons, mainly from Kars province, left Batum on the *Lake Huron* early in May, and after twenty-seven days on the ocean reached Quebec. Four died at sea; there were no births. At Grosse Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the ship was held in quarantine for smallpox for almost a month. Thirteen cases were discovered and isolated after Peter Vasilivich Verigin's mother, Anastasia, "Mother of God," had successfully been prevailed upon to assure the Dukhobors that their thirteen brothers and sisters would be returned to them when cured.

Before leaving Russia, the Dukhobors of this shipload had heard there were "no stones in Canada" . . . "Da, pravda!" This was a serious situation—no stones in Canada, so there would not be stones to mill the grain. What to do? They must take stones with them from Russia, enough for themselves and for the "poor brothers and sisters who had not known there are no stones in Canada, and so went there without any." Thus they lugged heavy stones into ironbound trunks, secreting others in wooden barrels. Only when they saw the rocky shores of Canada could they be persuaded that the stones might safely be dumped overboard. "The ship then rose one foot out of the water," remarked one of the sailors. The "no stones" rumor began, it seems, when someone told the Kars Dukhobors that the land selected for their settlement in the Northwest Territories was good land and free from stones.

Besides the Dukhobors, the *Lake Huron* this time brought A. N. Konshin, idealist and son of a wealthy Moscow merchant; Doctor Vera M. Velitchkina; Nurse E. D. Hiriakova, and "V. Olhovski." Olhovski's real name was Vladimir Bonch-Bruivich; his revolutionary activities had not pleased the Tsar's government.

Though the last shipload had reached Canada, debating continued in the House of Commons as to the character of the Dukhobors. Replying to the Conservative Opposition, Clifford Sifton, minister of the interior, spoke of their cleanliness aboard the boats and trains. He agreed with Prime Minister Laurier that a people should not be excluded from Canada "because they have conscientious objection to bearing arms. I think the House will not agree with the suggestion that because a man may have conscientious objections to bearing arms that therefore he has not

courage, therefore he has not those qualities which go to make a good citizen. . . . There is many a man ready to fight, and who has no courage at all; he has nothing in the sense of true courage. . . . I do not believe that I myself . . . would go through what these Dukhobors have gone through for the sake of their convictions. I doubt if there are five men in this House who would show the moral courage, who would show the tenacity, who would show the fortitude which these people have shown for the purpose of preserving the faith which they believe to be the true faith."

In Winnipeg, the faithful cooked and slept in two immigration halls, where almost every day Canadians came to view them, as if they had arrived from a distant planet. Such was the visitors' interest in their large wooden spoons that three old men, expert wood carvers, were kept busy making these to give away as souvenirs.

McCreary, the immigration official, was liked by the Dukhobors, and he in turn was impressed with the ponderous way they ate their meals, preceded by everyone standing to say a prayer, and followed by serious mastication. Joking or "unnecessary," talking at the table, was, on the advice of Peter Verigin, considered unbecoming to a Christian. Oatmeal soup with onions, porridge with butter, cheese, milk, molasses, tea, "and sugar that you can pour," was the menu of a special dinner arranged by a Winnipeg women's association.

On Sundays, before daylight, all assembled for the religious ceremony. The bread, salt, and water was placed on the ceremonial table, the v of men and women formed, and rhythmic waves of psalm pulsed forth from the human organ; followed by the hand-clasping, bowing and kissing ceremony, and finishing before noon with kneeling and touching of foreheads to the ground. Then came breakfast.

At Brandon three hundred Dukhobors were in the one immigration hall, their baggage piled in a near-by tent. Nikolai Zibaroff, to whom these looked as their elder, suggested that everyone find work. Idleness was not good, exercise was necessary and Christian; besides, a few rubles might be earned which would help buy tools for the settlement in the spring. So the Dukhobor men went out and sawed firewood all day, receiving as low as fifty cents for a day's work. The householders were pleased with this cheap labor. Several merchants and lawyers, who had voiced objection to their

entry into Canada, now commended the government for its "wise importation of husky 'bohunks'."

The regular laborers, who depended on such work for their food and shelter, were not pleased, however. As wages for unskilled labor continued to drop, they forsook their rugged individualism, and together they drafted a protest to the government "for bonusing the Dukhobors to come into Canada and starve Canadian workmen and their families."

"Dukhobors—worse than Chinamen, considering no one but themselves." The hostile meeting flowed out of the hall and through the snowbanked streets of Brandon, carrying signs, "Down with the Dukhobors."

The Dukhobors were amazed. It was the first time they had known of anyone being annoyed just because men wanted to work, even "for one ruble a day." When Sulerjitski explained the cause for this animosity, they agreed to accept nothing less than the regular wage rates in Brandon, and the antagonism of the laborers subsided amidst the disappointment of businessmen's wives.

Nikolai Zibaroff, always busy, shoveling snow from the walks in front of the immigration hall, planning ways to "save money for spring plowing when we get to our land," thought the brothers and sisters in Winnipeg were spending too much money for food. "They eat four times a day! *Ne nuzhna!* Not necessary! We live frugally with tea and bread for breakfast and vegetable soup for the next meal. They have honey, cheese, and milk. . . ."

Zibaroff, unable to write, dictated to Sulerjitski a letter of censure addressed to the extravagant Dukhobors of Winnipeg. Sulerjitski, who delivered the letter, watched the sweat gather on Vasa Popoff's forehead. Melosha Chernoff felt embarrassed too. Their reputations as elders were threatened. That evening, at a general meeting, everyone agreed to a more frugal diet.

Early in February a few days of warm weather, during which the temperature rose above zero, turned the attention of the Dukhobors to plans for settlement on the land. Tents must be obtained until the first log houses could be built; axes, saws, hammers, and some lumber, besides horses and sleighs. This initial expense was defrayed from the government bonus fund.

James A. Smart, deputy minister of the interior, had written to Aylmer Maude that the bonus arrangement would be simplified by the Canadian government paying "on behalf of these

people a sum equal to £1 [about \$4.86] per head for each man, woman, and child who may be reported at the office of the Commissioner of Immigration in Winnipeg." In that way the Dukhobors would receive the same amount as would have been paid under the first proposal, Smart wrote. "All moneys granted by the Government, are to be deposited in the Union Bank of Canada, at Winnipeg to the joint credit of W. F. McCreary (Commissioner of Immigration at Winnipeg), and Thomas McCaffrey, and payments made out of this fund only on order of the committee, Alexander Moffat, Accountant in the Commissioner's office at Winnipeg, to act as Secretary of the Committee."

Herbert P. Archer, who had arrived from England to take Maude's place as negotiator between the Dukhobors and the Canadian government, with Prince Hilkov, was added to the committee.

About one hundred of the youngest and ablest Dukhobor men left by C. P. R. train for Yorkton, Northwest Territories, two hundred and eighty miles west and north of Winnipeg. From Yorkton, with their tents, provisions and tools in horse-drawn sleighs, the advance party moved forty-five miles north to one of the three large blocks of homestead land set aside for the settlement, and which became known as the "South Colony."

They pitched their tents in a black-poplar forest on Section 27, Township 30, Range 1, and set to work cutting logs for temporary dwellings. Five large log houses were built, each with two rows of bunks. At this stage, Clifford Sifton, minister of the interior, visited the camp, staying a few days and nights. "A very nice man, eating his meals with us just like one of us," Mikhael Kazakoff thought.

Then a number of this advance party went on forty miles northward, where the second block of homestead land was reserved along the banks of the Swan River. Here they cut logs for the first houses of "Thunder Hill Colony." Zibaroff joined them there.

Toward the end of February another party of fifty with Sulerjitski left Winnipeg. Traveling in a coach on the end of a freight train, they reached Cowan one midnight, where Zibaroff greeted them. The one hotel-boardinghouse was already crowded. Several Indians with their dogs lay on the floor asleep. Two hefty lumberjacks, mackinaw coats under their heads, snored in a corner. In the kitchen a "Galician" girl (Ukranian from Galicia province)

with dusky eyes and a red apron, washed dishes, while a blond young Englishman dried and stacked rows of plates and cups. Dukhobors stretched out on the floor and benches. It was still dark outside when they awakened to eat their porridge.

After breakfast Zibaroff took them to the livestock tent, to show them the ten Percheron horses and six oxen, purchased from the bonus fund. The new sleighs were loaded with flour, salt, dried fruit and other provisions. As there were more supplies than the Dukhobor sleighs could carry, Zibaroff hired Canadian teamsters, so that everything could be moved at once, and nothing left stranded in Cowan when the thaw would come.

With red of dawn in the sky, the teamsters shouted at their horses, iron runners skudded on the beaten trail, and the sleigh train pulled out of Cowan. Younger Dukhobors, walking to save the horses, were in high spirits. Several frolicked alongside, pushing one another into the snow until an elder reprimanded them, "You will play around until you sweat inside your coats!" he shouted.

"Nichevo, no matter," replied a young fellow. "We will then buy an Englishman's coat with the fur on the outside."

This flippancy was not appreciated by the elder who was already displeased by the ease with which some of the young men had abandoned "Christian clothes" for the clothes of Canada. One lad was wearing a pair of yellow buckskin Indian moccasins; another had a Canadian cap with ear flaps, while Ivan wore an Englishman's waistcoat underneath his sheepskin. This was annoying, when clothes and Christianity were dependent one on the other.

At noon the sleigh train stopped in a clearing bordered by spruce and poplar trees. The horses were unhitched and fed, the Canadian teamsters putting the oats for their horses in the snow. Zibaroff thought this wasteful and remonstrated with a teamster who growled, "Mind your own business." In the opinion of the Canadians, the Dukhobors fed their horses too many oats.

After the meal, the men shoveled snow onto the campfires and hitched the horses; the sleigh train moved west, winding snakelike through the green forest.

Toward evening, they crossed a sparsely treed valley and came within view of Land Office, a mushroom shack-and-tent town on the trail halfway between Cowan and Thunder Hill Colony. Besides a land office, immigration shed and general store, Land Office boasted a hardware store and a Chinese laundry. A gang

of men, hammering together another frame building, stopped work to shout a welcome. Harley, the immigration agent, climbed on a bale of hay and gave a brief speech about great prospects in this new stretch of country. The Canadians bantered him, and shouted, "Welcome Duck-a-bors."

While some Dukhobors pitched their livestock tent and tended the horses, others went into the immigration shed to prepare food. It was a long building, lit by kerosene lamps and had a sawdust floor. A table and benches ran down the center, and there were two sizzling hot stoves, one at each end.

Most of Land Office came to the shed for the usual evening social. Three Canadians brought their fiddles and played "Turkey in the Straw." A few danced, and when the fiddlers changed to "Red River Jig," shouts went up for "Big Joe."

Joe, a half-breed, jumped into the circle as lightly as a cat, and loose sawdust flew from his moccasined feet. Before he exhausted himself in these strenuous steps—which combined elements of Indian, French and Scottish dances—several less agile men stepped into the ring. As some played out, others leaped in. The Canadian spectators "yipped" with the dancers, cheering and urging the fiddlers to faster tempo. The Dukhobor elders, looking censorious and superior, said nothing. Younger Dukhobors looked on with secret enjoyment. Faster and faster the fiddlers played; their feet tapping in the sawdust, sweat dripping from their faces. The orchestra played out before the dancers. Everyone had a rest, including the spectators. Then two Canadians began wrestling, which fascinated the younger Dukhobors more than the dancing.

"Look how they are rolling themselves in the sawdust!" young Feduk exclaimed excitedly.

"It is not a Christian way to behave," Zibaroff shook his head.

When the Canadians produced a rope for a test of brawn by sitting down in the sawdust, feet to feet, and pulling one another, some of the Dukhobors moved closer. Big Joe, the dancer, pulled everyone; no one man could prevail against *his* strength, and once he bested three men at a time.

Huge Feduk, stood watching with arms folded, smiling. A young fellow nudged him, "You could not pull that Big Joe."

Feduk, before he realized it, had one end of the rope in his great hands. Pointing a finger at Joe, he asked Sulerjitski, "Please tell him he should have two helpers."

When Sulerjitski interpreted, Joe smiled good-naturedly. He did not need any helpers.

"*Tri*, three!" Feduk insisted, holding up three fingers like three bananas on a stem.

"Be a sport, Joe. Take two men behind you," someone shouted.

Feduk and Joe sat down in the sawdust, feet to feet, the rope in their hands. Two more sat down behind Joe. The contest began, Joe's eyes bulging, Feduk's neck swelling red. The contestants swayed. Feduk, with a co-ordinated heave of arms and body, pulled Joe and the other two men over. The Canadians cheered. Feduk stood up, brushed the sawdust from his clothes, coiled the rope neatly, as he had learned to do from the sailors on the voyage to Canada, and walked back among the Dukhobors. Zibaroff looked sternly at him, while some of the younger fellows winked.

The Dukhobors slept restlessly that night in the overheated immigration shed. They did not open the doors, because they thought such heat must be customary for the "Englishmen."

After an early breakfast, the sleigh train pulled out again. The trail wound through a forest of lifeless trees, blackened and bleached by a fire of a few years before. Occasionally, rabbit tracks crossed the trail; once the splayed marks of snowshoes followed alongside for some hundred yards, then turned abruptly, seeming to disappear to a nowhere in the wilderness.

Out of the ghostlike forest, white prairie stretched ahead toward a lone hill, blue in the distance, Thunder Hill. The Indians so named Thunder Hill because it was a summer storm center, and when the thunder rumbled above it, lightning leapt down to strike its bald crown. The Indian legend said that inside the hill was an enormous eagle's egg, and every summer the eaglet, eternally imprisoned within the egg, pecked with its beak to break the shell. That was the thunder. From high in the clouds above, his spiritual mate sent down angry shafts of fire, ever trying to release him. That was the lightning. The Dukhobors, on hearing this explanation, thought it a very peculiar belief.

The trail on the wind-swept prairie was blown with shifting snow, causing the horses to strain in their harness. As the sun sank in a red glow, the men were tired with their trudging, and the horses, heads hanging low, were gray in frozen sweat.

"Soon we will be at the camp," Nikolai Zibaroff encouraged. "Here is where our land begins!"

The sleighs wound down a gradual incline toward the Swan River. Across the ice, welcome light shone from a tent and two log houses.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

COMMUNITY CONTROVERSY

THE ADVANCE PARTIES of younger men in the Thunder Hill and South colonies had built barnlike bunk and cook-houses to provide temporary havens for three shiploads of Dukhobors that had reached Western Canada by June of 1899. And now, old men, women and children left Winnipeg and Brandon immigration halls to join in the task of settlement.

To Thunder Hill Colony, where Nikolai Zibaroff was esteemed as an elder, went the "Wet Mountain" people who were first to cross the Atlantic aboard the Dukhobor *Mayflower*, the *Lake Huron*. To the South Colony went Elizevetpolsk and Kars folk, who came on the second freighter *Lake Superior*. In June, those who left Cyprus on the second voyage of the *Lake Huron*, joined the South Colony. In July, the last shipload of 2,300 people from Kars province went farther west about two hundred and twenty-five miles where, between Prince Albert and Saskatoon, they formed the North Saskatchewan River Colony. The Makaroff family and three others had brought wagons with them, and these they took, wheel by wheel and board by board, across the North Saskatchewan River in a boat. This entire colony settled north of the river, in the wooded era. The broad stream, flanked by high banks, had stopped prairie fires which had swept up from the south in the days of vast buffalo hunts. Though, since 1880, the shaggy great brown animals had been extinct between the South Saskatchewan and the North Saskatchewan Rivers, a few antelope remained.

Early in May, the settlers of the Thunder Hill and South colonies were striving to gain footholds on their land before the short summer would give way to winter. Elders had selected communal village sites in accord with Peter Verigin's instructions. As village houses were built, the temporary bunkhouses were taken apart log from log, this timber being re-used for additional houses and barns.

As the government bonus fund was almost exhausted, younger men of both colonies sought work at wage labor outside the settlement. The initial communal contract of this kind, cutting railway

ties, brought \$4,076 to the common treasury, a sum sufficient to pay the last money due Canadian teamsters who had hauled provisions, a few dollars being left for footwear. Success of the tie-camp venture gave impetus to the idea that able-bodied men should work in tie camps, at railways construction, on farms—anywhere so that money might be earned for food, clothing, and more horses and oxen.

Neither colony possessed horses nor oxen to spare for plowing the tough prairie sod. The few animals were already overworked, hauling logs for village buildings; fetching flour, salt, rice, butter and tea from Yorkton. The nearest railway station to the South Colony, Yorkton, was twice the distance from Thunder Hill. But Thunder Hill people had also to haul from Yorkton, a return trip requiring twelve days over one hundred and fifty miles of bush and prairie trail. Cowan, end of the projected line of the Canadian Northern Railway, was nearer Thunder Hill; over the winter road the ninety miles to Cowan and back could be driven in a week. But now the corduroy section through the muskeg of Cowan trail was sunk out of sight in water from melted snow and spring rains and bordered by broken wagons, together with caches of settlers' supplies.

Zibaroff, in Thunder Hill Colony, was able to assure the people fish was not meat; that when Peter Verigin had decreed against eating meat, he had not meant fish. Therefore, it "is Christian to catch fish from the Swan River and eat them." Besides, said Zibaroff, as many fish as possible should be caught and dried while spring fishing was good.

Villagers close by the river built a ferry on which to cross. At first, horses were hitched to the ferry and made to swim its deepest part, but as the water rose, the current became so swift that once horses, ferry and men, swept downstream, almost failed to gain the opposite bank. The men then strung two ropes from shore to shore, rigging the ferry in such a way that it would cross back and forth propelled by the force of the stream, in accord with the principle similar to that of a ship sailing at an angle into the wind.

Like ants, the Dukhobors worked in both colonies, yet beneath this ceaseless activity was dissension, at times boiling over in argument and accusation. While most of the "rich" Dukhobors did not wish everything to be owned in common, communal zealots urged one hundred per cent Christian communism . . . "everything owned in common as Petushka told us we should."

The impossibility of sending messengers to Peter Verigin in Siberia for "fresh advice," and the impact of a new country seemed to threaten with eventual disintegration this sect whose people knew neither the anarchy nor the democracy with which they were accredited. While the majority had little or no personal funds, there were a number from Kars and Elizavetpolsk provinces who had brought with them gold and paper rubles, and who, after changing them into Canadian currency, hoarded it against the day when they might leave the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood to live independently. A few had brought rich Turkish rugs which they sold for high prices. Many "rich brothers" who had not suffered exile saw the communal way of working as little more than an expedient necessary to gain independent foothold on the land.

Moneyless Dukhobors and communal zealots resented this attitude. "Why did you come to Canada when you do not wish to live the Christian way?" Melosha taunted Semon, of the South Colony.

"Why would I put my two horses in your commune?" Semon replied. "Soon all the horses will be dead. Their drivers are so often changed that no one knows how hard the poor horse has worked, or when last he was fed."

There were unceasing discussions concerning "what Peter would have us do . . . to eat fish . . . not to eat fish . . . to make our own boots or buy English boots . . . to hold everything in common, money, clothes, dishes . . . or to own only in common the horses, oxen, wagons and plows. Is it too late to sow grain? . . . Should the young men dig garden plots, or should they go away to work building the railway to earn money . . .

"If they go away they should keep part of their wages for their own families. . . . No, no, they should keep nothing for themselves, all money must be put in one bolshoi communal fund. . . .

"Is it right that we should have elders? . . . Da, yes, elders are necessary, how else are we to know what to do. . . . Nyet, elders are not necessary. Are we not all brothers and sisters together, are we not all equal? . . . My, my, it is plain that we are lost, nothing will be right until Petushka will leave Siberia and come to us. . . . Look at Tambovka commune, they have six horses, while we with more people have only one horse and an ox that is sick. Can that be right? . . .

"Is it right that our young men and women should marry now?

... And all married people have children again? ... How can it be right when Petushka did not tell us so? ... But Petushka meant that it would be right when we reached the new land. ... He only told us to stop six years ago because he knew we would be going on a journey, and that everything would be harsh, and so we should have no young children among us. ..."

"Da, da, Petushka knows everything. Now it will be right for us to have children. ... Slava Bohu."

Thus did the people find justification for natural instinct. Marriage, long deferred, became an epidemic among them, though there seems no record of Peter Verigin having rescinded his order.

Nikolai Zibaroff felt that every young and able man should work outside the colonies for wages and turn the money earned into the communal fund for purchasing livestock and agricultural implements. "Only in this way can we begin properly to work our land," he said. While it distressed him to know that there were men who shrank from leaving their villages, it hurt him more that others were working for wages which they had no intention of turning in to the communal fund.

Thunder Hill Colony, by comparison with the South Colony, was better organized. Led by Zibaroff, and made up of "Wet Mountain" people who in Georgian exile had shared common suffering and poverty, there was less inequality of personal wealth. Zibaroff strove to see that each village commune had an equitable share of provisions and draught animals. While he combined faith in Peter Verigin with a practicality of his own, there were men and women who accused this conscientious man of usurping the power which "belongs to Petushka alone."

Prince Hilkev, disillusioned with the Dukhobors, returned to Europe. Before he left, Sulerjitski had agreed to continue the thankless task of helping the people settle themselves. While he was much of his time among the Thunder Hill folk, Vladimir Bonch-Bruivich helped the South Colony. The nurses, Sasha Satz, Anna Rabetz, E. Markova, and Doctor Vera Velichkina worked wherever their services were required. None of these voluntary helpers expected payment, nor did they receive it. Though these "Russians who are not Christians," (not Dukhobors) suspected something of the Dukhobors' credulous faith in their absent leader, they were not aware of the extent to which they looked to him for direction. The Dukhobors, careful not to expose their ruler, reiterated the formula, "No one among us is greater than another, we have no leader, we are all brothers and sisters to-

gether." Thus these workers were unable to understand the seeming ingratitude of the Dukhobors.

Sulerjitski, after a tiring day's drive in search of a railway grading contract for the Dukhobors, stopped late one night at a village, where he requested a villager to unhitch and feed his horse.

"You yourself should unhitch the horse," said the Dukhobor standing there in the darkness.

"I think you should show some gratitude when I give you people all my time," said Sulerjitski almost losing patience.

"Nyet, no," replied the Dukhobor. "Leo Nikoliavich Tolstoy, your leader, sent you here to help us. You must do what he tells you. You should not look for thanks when we know you must obey your leader."

That Sulerjitski could be working without a "leader," seemed incomprehensible to the faithful.

Word reached Thunder Hill Colony that Turnbull, civil engineer for the Canadian Northern Railway, was en route to Land Office, there to let labor contracts for extending the grade north from Cowan. Ziberoff, who had prevailed on the Thunder Hill people to accept all railway work that could be found, went to Land Office, with two elders, to meet the civil engineer. He was pleased to find fifteen men from the South Colony ready for work, and living in the immigration shed where, the winter before, Feduk had bested Big Joe the half-breed dancer.

A week went by with Turnbull still delayed as a result of impassable roads. Ziberoff fretted at this loss of valuable time which could have been spent digging garden plots and improving the villages. The older Dukhobors, feeling dejected, talked of their experiences in Canada so far. Occasionally they assembled in the immigration hall to sing a melancholy psalm.

Their strange singing attracted the idle population of Land Office, who, like the Dukhobors, awaited work. Billy, an Englishman was curious about this "bohunk music which sounds like a bloody cow dying," and Tom, his partner, was curious because he had heard they would not fight.

"No sir, they will not fight. It's part of their bloody religion."

"I don't believe it," said Billy. "Listen, they're 'aving another of their songs. Let's go in again."

Inside the hall, Billy made peculiar noises in his throat in the hope that the Dukhobors would notice him. When mimicry failed to attract attention, he hopped about in front of the choir, bump-

ing into one or two, but holding himself in readiness to jump out of the way if any one retaliated.

The Dukhobors finished their psalm and tried to behave as if nothing unusual had happened. Anton, an immense young Dukhobor, swallowed hard and his face became very red.

"I'd really like to know what sort of chumps you are," shouted Billy to Anton. "Wouldn't fight if you 'ad to!"

"*Bil-mus*," Anton replied in Turkish. It meant that he did "not understand." Dukhobors were inclined to reply in Turkish when confronted with a language they did not understand. They thought, with some reason, that the best one could do when addressed in a "foreign" language was to reply in another "foreign" language.

Several more idlers had entered the hall and were watching the play.

"I'll be blowed!" exclaimed Billy. "Do they mean anyone could give them a poundin', and they'd do nothing abaht it?"

"Yah, you best not believe all you hear," said a Swede. "I once knew a fellow who wouldn't kill a chicken, but that same man shot his whole family."

The Scandinavian's gruesome reminiscence was followed by a moment of silence, the Dukhobors standing with arms folded in stubborn dismay, here and there a face showing anger. More idlers had come into the slab building.

"'Ere," Billy roused himself, "let's be friends. 'Ave a cigarette for yourself" He offered a Dukhobor elder pouch and papers.

"Nyet," the elder shook his head slowly.

"What? Don't smoke?" said Billy blowing a mouthful of smoke into the old man's face. "'E really enjoys it second-'and though!"

"Piss on their stove!" shouted someone amidst guffaws.

As the Dukhobors abandoned their bunkhouse, the fun had gone a bit too far for one Englishman: "You shouldn't have done that," he said. "You ought to know enough is enough. Get out of here, all of you, and leave their place alone."

"Sure. Who would want to stay in it now?"

A sense of shame was felt as both instigators and spectators dispersed from the building. None threw more taunts at the Dukhobors who stood in a huddle outside.

"*Sivilizoni Anqlichani!* Civilized Englishmen!" said Zibaroff.

"Worse than Turks." Anton plucked a slender stem of grass from the shimmering prairie.

"And we thought they were Christians!"

"Tomorrow, if the engineer comes, we will go away from here. Slava Bohu."

That evening the Dukhobors might have been left to themselves but for an itinerant bootlegger who, with several quarts of rye whisky secreted beneath the seat of his buggy, drove into the slab and tent town. As the Dukhobors were finishing their supper around the long table in the immigration shed, Billy and Tom unsteadily entered the door, some twenty hopeful spectators trailing after them.

"How do you do," began the little Cockney, with a mock bow.

The unhappy Dukhobors continued munching their bread. One said in Turkish, "Bil-mus."

"What are they say—ing?" hiccoughed Tom.

"Ow do I know?" replied Billy.

After preliminaries, which included patting the back of a Dukhobor's head and snapping another's ear, Billy jostled an elder's elbow, spilling tea down the front of the old fellow's beshmet.

"Listen, Billy." Tom winked a bleary eye. "You're too easy on them. Try putting ashes in their tea."

"That's an idea," laughed Billy lunging over to a pail of ashes by the cookstove. With an unsteady handful he returned to the elder.

"Try this in your tea, old fellow," he said, dumping the ashes into the old man's bowl.

"Oh! My God!" exclaimed the elder. "Why do they treat us so?"

This incident brought running comment from the Dukhobors around the table: "These Englishmen. . . . What a people! . . . Worse than Tartars. . . . There is nothing we can do but keep the door locked. . . ."

"Look at the big lummoX, sitting there as if someone had put sugar in his tea," jeered someone.

Young Anton rose ponderously. Face red and fidgeting with the collar of his beshmet, he came slowly around the end of the table.

Billy was indulging in ribald oratory for the entertainment of the audience in the doorway. Anton reached out with one huge hand, grasped him by the back of his collar and lifted him from the ground as if he weighed no more than a chicken. Billy

wriggled, and Anton smacked him over his ear. With a groan, Billy fell to the sawdust.

Anton looked down at him.

From the gapers in the doorway: "Didn't I tell you they wouldn't keep on taking it?"

Billy stirred in the sawdust. Two Dukhobors helped him to his feet.

Anton walked back to his place on the bench, other young fellows looking at him with approval. But Ziharoff was "not sure it was a right thing to do." Elders shook their heads: "Was it Christian? . . . Should a man be beaten because he is not enlightened? . . . It is not our business to fight. . . ."

Anton, breathing heavily, looked down at the table. He felt some perturbation at the censure of the elders, but deep inside he was not sorry to have broken the code of nonviolence.

The sunset glowed red in the empty doorway. There was silence, except for the far-off cry of a loon.

A week went by, a week of fine June days, and still Turnbull did not come. Zibaroff, with as many Dukhobors as could crowd into one buggy, set out for Cowan. With the buggy springs flattened against the axles, the horses trotted easily along the prairie trail leading into the forest. By the roadside the grass was the rich green of early summer, the air pungent with Saskatoon blossoms white among the green leaves of the poplar trees.

In the spruce forest the trail became a lane of water, mud and broken corduroy poles. Where the morass was worst were abandoned wagons, wheel rims from which the spokes had been torn, and broken reaches. On log platforms settlers' supplies were piled—bags of flour covered with canvas, a sewing machine in a crate, bedsteads, a dresser wrapped in burlap, and cases of canned goods.

The Dukhobors marveled that these valuable possessions could be left safely, protected only by the unwritten law of the prairie.

"And no one will steal them?"

"The Englishmen say not. They say it is possible to leave a fur coat by the road in winter, and no one will steal it."

"That is Christian. In some ways Canada is a Christian country. In Caucasia what would be left?"

"Nichevo, nothing."

Ten abandoned wagons were strewn along half a mile of muskeg. In the growing darkness the horses scrambled from log to log of what had once been a corduroy road.

"What roads!" exclaimed Zibaroff as a loose pole caught in the running gear of the buggy.

The heavily loaded vehicle dropped into a deep hole. The seat sank down to the muddy water. The horses stopped, up to their bellies in mud. The men got out, their legs sinking in the morass, and when they lifted the buggy the frame was broken. They went on through the night, leading their horses.

Horses and men, mud drying on them in the morning sun, reached Cowan, where they found Turnbull. The civil engineer was not the inaccessible officer they would have expected to find in Russia. No gold braid; he lived in an office with bunks and a box stove.

Sulerjitski was there to interpret, and a contract was made. The Dukhobors would receive fourteen cents per cubic yard for earth filled on the railway grade. The Canadian Northern would supply picks, shovels, wheelbarrows, axes, and lumber for runways. Each month, two Dukhobors, provided with passes would go to Winnipeg to buy supplies. They must cook their own food.

"And we can use all the men you can send us," Turnbull promised.

Next day Zibaroff returned to Thunder Hill Colony, there to spread the news from village to village. Within a week one hundred men were on their way to Cowan.

Thunder Hill Colony, with its thirteen villages, had 1,400 people on 80,000 acres of land—five hundred quarter sections. Of this virgin prairie sod and bush only a few acres had been plowed or spaded. The draught animals were still required to haul supplies from Yorkton, seventy-five miles distant. The entire colony possessed only four milk cows, twenty horses, twenty-one oxen, and thirteen wagons. When many a Western Canadian farmer considered twelve horses necessary to work his quarter section of one hundred and sixty acres, the Dukhobors need for more livestock was great.

While the ablest men were away working, old men, women and children toiled at home, cutting logs for more buildings, digging garden plots, and gathering firewood for winter.

A woman, irked with the slowness of turning over the tough prairie sod by spade, recalled the days in Caucasia "when our virgins hitched themselves to the plow and plowed a furrow around the village to keep out the cholera."

"Da," another agreed, "why do we not now hitch ourselves to the plows?"

The idea spread. Soon the plows were biting into the prairie, each pulled by twenty-four women, with one of the old men between the plow handles. At first the rope harness cut into the women's bellies, searing them like thin ill-fitting horse collars. Then they tied sticks to the long rope, twelve poplar sticks placed at intervals to allow two women to a stick, one on each side of the rope, and thus grasping these sticks in their hands, it was easier.

In the South Colony, dissension increased. Some villages were completely on a communal basis. Others were semicommunal; others were running independently, each family claiming even its own axes and spades. Vasili Potapoff, whose village of Rodionovka was communal, set out from village to village to call a convention "so that all the brothers and sisters will meet together and decide how we should live." Vasili favored the "communal way of life, the brotherly and sisterly life, everyone living in love and equality; none hungry, poor or rich." He thought there should be one big commune embracing the villages of both colonies.

"But how can that be?" asked a woman of one of the villages Vasili visited. "The Thunder Hill people eat fish. That is not right, and we cannot join with them." She had refused to greet one of her relatives from Thunder Hill "because his kiss tasted of fish."

Yet zealots and doubters, rich and poor assembled for the convention, July 6, in Tombovka village of the South Colony. In the morning, at the sunny side of the largest barn, about three hundred men stood to sing the opening psalm. Closest to the barn, and with their backs toward it, sat elders anxious to express themselves at the meeting. In front of them was a long table, on the other side of which sat some sixty of the more important older folk.

On the first row of benches sat "rich brothers," in beshmets and high Russian boots. They were the men who had brought Russian rubles and Turkish carpets, and who saw little advantage in communal farming with the poor brothers. Behind these well-fed men, on benches and on the ground, sat Thunder Hill delegates with lean faces and patched beshmets, together with other "poor" delegates from South Colony villages.

"Where is Vasa Popoff, did he not come?" asked Chernenkoff.

"He is not well. It is forty miles, and the trail is rough," explained Zibaroff.

Sulerjitski, Bonch-Bruivich and Arthur St. John, who had been surveying the quarter sections of land, were at the meeting. They said little. They had begun to realize that no matter how they helped, the Dukhobors would continue to regard them as foreigners.

The discussion soon turned to "how we will get enough money to buy food and horses."

One delegate, a lean faced Cyprus refugee from a South Colony village, said that in his village there was nothing left to eat but flour, and the last of it would be gone in a month. "We should all go to the railway grade and work there for wages," he thought.

Another South Colony man disagreed. "Our place is behind the plow on our land," he said. "We are not people to build railways."

"But how are we to get the horses and plows to plow our land?" asked another.

Someone suggested borrowing money.

"Da," agreed an elder at the table, "we must get a loan before we perish."

"There are some of the brothers among us here who have money," said Semon.

The "rich brothers" sitting along the front bench looked uncomfortable.

Suggestions about a loan continued. Possibly McCreary, the immigration man, Archer, and the Russian friends might use their influence.

"Possibly if we would write a letter to Grandfather Leo Nikolaivich Tolstoy, or to the Quakers," came a timid voice. "Possibly they might send an offering. Slava Bohu."

Zibaroff, unable to conceal his anger, rose to his feet.

"Ts-ah! God help me restrain myself! Can you not say something that one will not be ashamed of? Have we not had enough offerings from our friends already? Let every strong man go to the railway grade and get work. Then we will have flour and plow horses. But no, they cannot do that, they must talk and argue, some staying in their villages, others getting jobs and putting the wages in their own pockets. Let us all go to the railway grade and work together as brothers, putting all our wages in the commune." Zibaroff sat down.

"Pravda! Nikolai Zibaroff speaks the truth."

"Selfishness is ruining everything. There is no longer a Christian spirit."

Before this question was settled the discussion turned to the division of horses and oxen among the villages.

"How can we hope to have equal division of the horses that we will buy, when, even now, everything is unfair?" shouted a short man with large mustaches, an angry light in his eyes.

"Da, our village has only one pair of oxen for a hundred and seventy people. Spasivka village, having less people, has four horses and a wagon."

A man from Spasivka rose to his feet. "And what kind of horses have we? They are not worth your pair of oxen. One is a cripple, and we have no harness for him anyway. He is strong enough only to stand up and eat grass. . . ."

On and on went the argument, disclosing that not one village was satisfied.

"Stop this useless talk," shouted old Melosha Kanigan. "Do you want to take the axes and chop up the horses and wagons to divide them amongst each village?"

It was getting late in the afternoon, and nothing had been decided. Vasili Potapoff accused the whole convention of behaving like Turkish tribes, instead of Dukhobors. Was this the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood? Was this the way to practice the principles of Christian communism?

"Once more I say that all the brothers and sisters in Canada should unite in one big commune so that all the food, animals, implements—everything in every village be held in common and shared by all. . . . Elders, will you adopt the plan I offer? Say yes or no. Let us anyway know where we stand."

There was uneasy silence. Eyes turned to the "rich" on the front bench. These of the tight beshmets and shiny boots were faced with a disturbing question, difficult to answer by noncommittal remarks.

"Well," began a "rich" brother in a voice lacking conviction, "it would be very nice to do those things if everyone takes part. A very Christian thing to do," he hesitated.

Zibaroff spoke again. For practical administration, he suggested two communes, one for each colony, but if one colony had more than the other, there should be an adjustment between the two.

"Yes, yes, we must carefully consider a plan," said a red-faced

fellow from the front bench, grasping at an opportunity to shelve the question.

The sun was sinking. Nothing had been decided. The meeting was restless.

Melosha Kanigan shouted above the babble of voices. "Are we for the large commune, or against? Let each village say now if or not it is in favor of Vasili Potapoff's *resolutsia*. This is no time for slyness!"

A front bencher turned to Melosha. "Have you the right to commit your village when all the brothers and sisters of your village are not present at this meeting?" he hissed.

"Why not?" returned Melosha. "My village sent me here. Why else would I drag myself here. To look at you?"

The "rich" brothers insisted they had no such authority. They would have to consult everyone in their villages.

"That is an old trick of men of your kind," Melosha accused. "You knew we were coming to this meeting to discuss communal life, so you would not bring with you the authority to decide." He strode up to the table of elders. "Write down that my village of Troitski is willing to enter communal life under one committee of elders for all." He turned to the benches. "Anyone else who is willing?"

There was uneasy silence again. Several on the front bench glared at Melosha and then looked at their boots.

Delegates from Thunder Hill approached the table and signed in favor of communal life. The majority from both colonies favored communal life, but the "rich" insisted they had no authority to say.

In the gathering dusk the convention broke into groups, indistinct discussion continuing long after the last redness had left the sky in the northwest.

In the morning, the delegates left for their villages. The "rich ones" of the South Colony persuaded their villages that communal ownership was not practical. Other villages, even their zealots disheartened, dropped the idea of one large commune; a number continued with various degrees of village communism.

In Thunder Hill Colony, the thirteen villages decided to have one communal administration for the entire colony. All the money earned on the railway grade would be received in the communal fund. Food and clothing would be purchased wholesale, and everyone would apply to the committee of elders for supplies. The boxcarload of flour at Cowan should be used by the men work-

ing on the railway grade, as the road through the muskeg was still impassable for loaded wagons.

More men walked through the forest to the railway grade. At home old men in worn boots, barefoot boys and girls harnessed themselves to wagons and hauled spruce logs "for the barns we will need when our men come home with money to buy horses and cows." The men might work on the grade until winter. "We must have some barns ready before snow comes."

Ten or twelve horses, not needed for hauling provisions the seventy miles from Yorkton, were hitched to the plows.

And wives and young girls hitched to the plows in teams of twenty-four continued to turn over the prairie sod. Sometimes they walked in time to their own melancholy singing, the muscles standing out on their bare legs, their beshawled heads bent forward and wet with sweat. In the mornings, their children, too young to work, frolicked beside them in the long prairie grass, like colts following draught mares. And, with a muffled grumble, the sod was turned over, tips of grass and flowers peeping from beneath rows of fresh plowing.

Three hundred miles to the west, in the North Saskatchewan River Colony, about 2,000 persons were settling on their land between Prince Albert and Saskatoon. Poorer families dug holes in the river bank, until they could afford a log house with a sod roof. Others with cash built on the village sites. Young men found work at railway construction, in sawmills, on farms. In this colony many were opposed to communal ownership, though all favored living in villages, rather than that each family should live separately on a quarter section "like the English-Canadian farmers."

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RAILWAY GRADE

IN THE SOUTH COLONY, "rich" Dukhobors of Novatroitski village loaned \$500 to "poor" Dukhobors of Selkiper village. With this loan the villagers bought food, farm implements, horses. Within seven weeks, the "rich" went to the "poor" and took back the horses, saying that payment of the loan was too slow.

Soon after that, each village received a loan of \$125 from money sent by Aylmer Maude in England. The Selkiper people bought two wagons and a horse. A few days later the Novatroitski creditors went again to the Selkiper debtors. They collected both wagons and the horse, saying, "These are ours because you still owe us \$58.99."

"Yes," said a Selkiper Dukhobor, "but what of the \$66.01 that is still ours? Yet you are taking everything from us."

The Novatroitski men insisted that was not so. "You used our money for seven weeks, buying horses with most of it. That was the same as using our horses, so now you must pay by letting us have the last two wagons and the horse."

Thus the Novatroitski "rich" went away with the wagons and horse, leaving the Selkiper "poor" with little more than they had had before it all, but owing Aylmer Maude \$125.

News of incidents such as these spread, increasing confusion among the brothers. At the same time they became still more dubious of the good intentions of their Russian and English "guides." Yet, incongruously enough, "Tolstoy's followers," were expected to perform feats of legerdemain and conjure wagons and bags of flour from nothing.

Leo Sulerjitski, at Yorkton to meet a Quaker who was in Canada to visit the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, saw a Dukhobor riding an ox and leading another along the dusty main street. Both the lad and the oxen looked as if they had come from a distance.

"Sdorovo, Leo Alexandrovich. It is like this," the boy began. "I was sent to you by the elder of our village, because in our village soon there will be no flour left. So, I was sent to bring

back some flour. Our neighbors will not haul flour for us now. They used to haul it, but they stopped. So, I was sent."

"What do you expect me to do?" Sulerjitski asked. "There is no general fund."

"Well," said the lad, blinking his naive and serious blue eyes, "the elder told me not to come back without a wagon and flour. They said you would find a new wagon and flour, *slava Bohu*."

One of the oxen coughed, and the other seemed to roll his round eyes as if to assist the appeal. This, coupled with the thought of the village elders waiting for the lad to return with a hundred sacks of flour, caused Sulerjitski to laugh aloud.

The lad's mouth opened in amazement. How could Leo Alexandrovich be so frivolous?

As if in answer to a prayer, the visiting Quaker came along the street. He had with him a small gift of money for the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. And so was the miracle performed. *Slava Bohu*!

The next morning, the lad, sitting on top of a load of flour in a new green and red wagon, left Yorkton for his village. When he arrived home, he related how "Leo Alexandrovich likes to tease." Of course Sulerjitski had known all the time where to get a wagon and a load of flour. How these Russian "officers" like to joke!

Toward the end of July, women and children of the South Colony trudged through the long grass in search of wild strawberries. They gathered wild spinach too, the nurses, Anna Rabetz and E. Markova, encouraging them because there was indication of scurvy among the children who lacked fresh vegetables and milk.

In Thunder Hill Colony, even Nikolai Zibaroff was becoming disheartened. The men were leaving the railway grade, because they said, they could earn no more than six cents a day. Perplexed, Zibaroff sent a messenger to Sulerjitski, with a request that he find out the trouble.

With horse and buggy, Sulerjitski started over the trail to Cowan, and as he bumped over the shattered corduroy road he pondered on why the Dukhobors could earn no more than six cents a day. Twenty men came toward him through the lane of spruce trees. They marched dejectedly, their clothes mud-spattered and torn. "Like remnants of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow," he thought as he greeted them; he asked why were they leaving their work.

They looked at one another. A man in a tattered beshmet brushed a mosquito from the end of his flat nose and said, "It is no use to stay. We earn only six cents a day."

"Why is it the other men can make \$1.50 a day on the same grade?" Sulerjitski asked.

"Well, Leo Alexandrovich, we have bad places to work. Wet ditches with many stones," said one.

Sulerjitski, on questioning several others, received the same answer. "Wet ditches with many stones," as if repeating a mournful psalm. Puzzled, he drove on. The Dukhobors continued their weary retreat homeward.

Along the trail he met more men straggling back, and each group gave the same answer to his question.

When he reached the railway grade, not a Dukhobor remained at work. He found Turnbull, the civil engineer, and together they walked over the grade where the Dukhobors had been working.

"They would get together and talk," said Turnbull, "then a few would leave. I don't know what they were saying, of course, but you can see for yourself that this is not an especially hard section. Besides, they picked their own spots over a mile of right of way, and the good digging averages with the bad fairly well. When they first came they worked hard, threw up a lot of grade and made wages as good and better than any of the men on the job." Turnbull was as puzzled as Sulerjitski.

Still without a clue, Sulerjitski returned over the forty-five miles to Thunder Hill Colony. In the villages he found inertia and disinclination to discuss the railway grade enigma.

After a few days of persuasion, early in August, delegates from the thirteen villages reluctantly assembled in Mikhaelovka village. When the last notes of the opening psalm had floated over the goldenrod, desultory discussion began, one Dukhobor blaming another for the failure of the work.

"Wet ditches with many stones," gave way to, "Those people in the village of Stradaevka sent only their very young boys to the grade, leaving the strong men at home."

"Somebody had to stay home and build the houses and barns," defended a Stradaevka villager.

"All of us have homes to build, and that is no excuse," replied another.

For hours accusations were passed back and forth with tedious lack of logic.

Sulerjitski, feeling the truth would come out if the discussion

continued long enough, passed the time checking accounts from merchants of Land Office. Some of these counter-check slips had no names of the Dukhobors who had received the merchandise. In these cases, all that the merchant knew was that the man was a Dukhobor and that he had promised the account would be paid from wages earned on the railway grade. Such was their reputation for monetary honesty.

"Postoi! Wait!" shouted Sulerjitski above the babble of voices. "I will read the accounts to you."

He read aloud the various items of sugar, boots, butter, socks; more sugar, butter—the delegates interrupting to ask one another, "Who bought this? Who bought that? . . . Why so many pairs of gloves?"

"Butter, sugar," Sulerjitski went on, then suddenly, "two pounds of tobacco."

"Tobacco!"

"What's that?"

"Who bought it?"

Elders looked at one another in astonishment.

"Someone among us is smoking," Legebokoff exclaimed, face like that of a Spanish inquisitor.

"Why does anyone need tobacco?"

"Who bought it?" again someone asked.

From a back bench came a guilty voice. "The tobacco, it was bought for tooth medicine. It was—"

"So! That is what happens!" A man with a massive head thrust out his jaw at the culprit. "Those who do not work, stroll about in low-cut shoes and smoke tabak—knowing they will have their tea with sugar in it from someone else's labor. Then those who go away to earn the money come home in worn-out boots and live on bread. What is the use of working if one lives in a commune?"

One after another, men rose to tell the meeting there was no use working when they could see no benefit from it. . . . "It would be much better if the bolshoi commune for the thirteen Thunder Hill villages was done away with. . . . Each village should have its own commune. . . . Da, da, then we will know who is working and who is not. . . . What everyone is buying and why . . . where our wages are going. . . ."

Thus the mystery of six cents a day was solved. "Wet ditches with many stones," had been a fabrication agreed upon to con-

ceal the real reason for quitting and to avoid, for as long as possible, the disagreeable ordeal of frank discussion.

The delegates decided that in future all money earned by the men of one village should be received and disbursed by the elders of that village—"no more large communes." Vasili Chernenkoff was elected "wholesale" treasurer; from wholesale firms in Winnipeg he was to purchase for all the villages, but only after each had told him its needs. Only the men who earned the money would have the right to say how it should be spent. A man leaving the grade before completion of the work would forfeit his right to vote concerning use of earnings.

The new economic policy of Thunder Hill Colony was received so enthusiastically that the men returned to the railway, and old men, women and children worked the harder plowing, hauling logs for stables, plastering houses with clay and piling firewood for the winter. On the grade there was keen competition between the various village groups. Civil Engineer Turnbull was surprised and satisfied. Could these be the same men who, two weeks before, had scratched the ground with their picks and used their shovels to lean on while they argued?

For two weeks the men kept up the tempo of hard work, but toward the end of August they slackened their pace, and began holding meetings again, to discuss leaving the grade and going south for the wheat harvest. Farmers near Winnipeg, they had heard, were paying \$35 a month and board. "All the Canadians have gone to work in the harvest; why is it necessary that we stay here?" said Feduk.

Nikolai Aldakimonich opposed going to the harvest fields. He had discovered that the railway fare to Winnipeg was more than nine dollars each, "and to walk there would take one week."

"Why can we not get more money here?" suggested another. "We should ask the engineer."

In the morning a delegation approached Turnbull, asking for sixteen cents a cubic yard—two cents more than the original contract. Turnbull refused. If they did not wish to work at the old rate, they could leave, and he would get other men for the job.

Another meeting was called. At the end of two hours discussion they decided to lie down in the shade of the spruce trees "where we will rest, until we are promised sixteen cents."

Except for a few flies zigzagging above it, the grade was deserted. Neither the ring of a pick nor the scrape of a shovel disturbed the afternoon air. The foreman, in a brown derby hat,

came out of his tent, his horselike lips muttering, "These bohunks . . . you never know what they are going to do next." He shouted to the men, "Why quit? Go to work."

Ponderously a Dukhobor rose to his feet. "*Schestnawtsat*," he said holding up his fingers on both hands, then closing them, then opening them to hold up all fingers of one hand and one finger of the other.

The foreman took his pipe out of his mouth. "You won't get sixteen cents," he said.

Turnbull telegraphed the Winnipeg office for men, but transient labor was feeding wheat sheaves into humming threshing machines, and no men were available at the wage rate offered by the railway.

For two days the Dukhobors rested, after which Turnbull offered them fifteen cents. They still asked for sixteen, but on the third day they agreed to fifteen and a half cents.

At Cowan, still end of commercial steel, twenty Dukhobors had finished a contract for unloading rails, and they wanted their money before joining the brothers on the grade. The English-speaking foreman had told them, through an interpreter that, as their money must come from Winnipeg, they would have to wait three days.

"Three days? In three days we will have eaten all our food," said Kuzma.

"And we will lose the wages we would have if we were working with the brothers," said another.

Kuzma had a suggestion. "Possibly if we tell the foreman 'Kodam,' he will get the money for us."

"What does that mean, 'Kodam'?" asked Efrem.

"It means something to those Englishmen. When they are angry and in a hurry they always say, 'Kodam,'" said Kuzma. "Now we are angry at *him* and *we* want our money, skoro!"

"Da, we should now go and tell the foreman 'Kodam.'"

The twenty men went to the foreman's car. Kuzma knocked on the car door.

"What do you want?" asked the foreman.

"Moni give," said Kuzma, holding open his hands.

"I told you you must wait. Come-from-Winnipeg," said the foreman. He paid no more attention to the Dukhobors but went along the cinder path toward the station.

"Kodam," shouted Kuzma after him. "Kodam, kodam." echoed the others.

"Kodam, kodam, kodam, kodam," all joined the chorus, following the foreman to the station like twenty angry geese.

The foreman hurried. He had heard things about these Dukhobors. One could never tell what they would do. They might be peaceful, but what had they done to the fellow in Land Office who put ashes in their tea? It was the first time he had heard them in angry words.

"Kodam, kodam!"

Section men in the yard gaped at the spectacle. The locomotive engineer of the work train, oilcan in hand, paused by the wheels of his panting engine. The telegrapher thrust his head from the station window.

"We must get authority wired from Winnipeg to release their wages," the foreman told the telegrapher. "I don't want them hanging around here."

"Telegram-money-come-today," he called through the window to the Dukhobors.

That afternoon they received their wages. Thanking the foreman and bowing, they boarded a work train which would take them to within a few miles of where the brothers were working. As the train rocked along the new road-bed, the Dukhobors discussed the magic of the English word, "Kodam."

"Pravda," Semon nodded, "it is a very important word to the Anglicani."

The train stopped at the gravel-pit switch, and they climbed out of the bunk car to trudge past rows of new ties and a giant shovel snorting white steam into the clear autumn air.

It was almost time to stop work for the day when they reached the first group of brothers working in the ditch, but the conventional greeting could not be deferred.

"Sdorovo jevotey," said the spokesman for the newcomers, who lifted their caps and bowed.

"Slava Bohu," the Dukhobors in the ditch dropping their tools, returned the bow. The greeting proceeded. To hurry it was not the Christian way. Riley, the foreman's assistant, was intrigued with these ceremonies; each time they seemed to fascinate him more, and he fixed the Russian words in his memory. Next morning he felt ready to try it himself, and stopped ceremoniously on the grade.

"Sdorovo jevotey," he said, lifting his straw hat high above his red head and bowing from the waist.

With a clatter the Dukhobors dropped their shovels and picks.

"Slava Bohu," they raised their caps and bowed.

"Spasi hospodi," said Riley bowing.

"Spasi hospodi," returned the spokesman.

"Nashi vam poklon pasilali," continued Riley, which meant that all Riley's fold bowed to the God within the Dukhobors in the ditch.

"Spasi ich hospodi. May it please the Lord to save them," the Dukhobors bowed.

Riley bowed once more, put on his straw hat, and, highly pleased with the success of his experiment, went along the grade to the foreman's office.

These greetings became a diversion which relieved the monotony of the camp. When the foreman first caught him at it, they both laughed. But later he warned Riley not to waste the men's time.

On a morning with a cool tang of fall in the air, Riley, unaware that the foreman was walking the grade not far behind him, stopped alongside a gang where big Kuzma was working.

"Sdorovo jevote," he began, lifting his hat.

"Slava Bohu," the Dukhobors dropped their tools.

"Spasi hos—"

"Say, Riley," the foreman shouted, "I thought I told you to stop that. . . . every time you do it you cut down a man's work by forty minutes. Leave those elephants to their work, I'm telling you. You're getting to be a 'godam' nuisance."

Riley argued with the foreman, the Dukhobors looking, disconcerted by this rude interruption of their ceremony.

Kuzma picked up his shovel, and remarked, "Pravda, brothers, what they are now saying must be very important, both at once shouting 'kodam!'"

In September the new grade reached the east bank of the Swan River at a point some twenty miles from the nearest Dukhobor village, Mikhaelovka. In the mornings white frost glistened on the planks running up from ditch to grade. Yellow leaves floated down from poplar trees, wild rose bushes were as red as their seed pods. In November the rails reached the river, while farther on, the Dukhobors—now the only men left on the job—slowly built more grade from the frozen earth.

"Soon we shall have to chop the ground with an axe," sighed Kuzma laying aside his pick.

"We are working harder, eating more, and making less and less money," said another.

"Da, I think it is useless to stay here like birds pecking at stone."

That afternoon work stopped for a meeting at which it was decided that "the time has come for us to go home to our villages." The foreman agreed also that they could now earn little more than enough to buy their food. So they started back along the grade they had built, carrying their tents, blankets, flour and potatoes.

On reaching the Swan River and the steel, they were offered a contract to clear away bush for the new townsite. The town would be called Swan River, and already gangs of carpenters were putting up frame buildings. The Dukhobors took the contract, and while they cut down the willows and poplar trees, the carpenters' saws and hammers worked fast to beat the first snow.

To this widening clearing at the railhead came most of Land Office, the mushroom log, shack and tent town where the Dukhobors had had their introduction to frontier horseplay. Cowan moved up, too—railway buildings, boarding house, merchants and all—leaving behind rusty cans, worn-out overalls and tree stumps to commemorate it.

Log upon log, board above board, spike after spike, Swan River, unpainted but proud, rose up in the clearing, ahead of the first heavy fall of snow by a few hours. The Dukhobor crew was proud, too. Home to their villages they marched through the forest, singing happy hymns. They had brought the railway closer to the colony. They had money to buy horses for spring plowing.

"Mikhaelovka is beginning to look like a proper village," said Gregori.

"Snow on the roofs like in the Wet Mountains," said another.

"And fences already!"

The old men, wives, girls and children had built wooden fences around the new plowing—the plots in the prairie that "our sisters plowed like horses."

In Milkhaelovka, the first log bunkhouse, built nine months ago, had become the hospital for Thunder Hill Colony. Dr. Vera Velichkina shared the log house beside it with Nurse Satz. Vladimir Bonch-Bruvich was in the village, writing down the words of Dukhobor psalms, sorting his collection of Verigin letters and preparing an article for a Russian language newspaper. Sulerjitski brought his diary up to date and discussed with Zibaroff plans for a co-operative store.

The white lull which comes with the first snows of real winter, and this reunion of husbands and wives and families, brought a holiday feeling to the villages of Thunder Hill. Steam baths. Long nights in feather beds, pleasant afternoons by warm stoves. The smell of fresh bread from the ovens. Borsh, soup, "with other vegetables in it besides potatoes." Pancakes with honey and tea with sugar. A looking-back on the summer's difficulties; difficulties diminished by time and the harvest of wages. Hopeful plans for spring.

To this seasonal mood the four Russian "guides" responded in their "unchristian way." In Mikhaelovka village, in the evening, with wood snapping in the box stove, they recalled Moscow and St. Petersburg. The stage, the ballet—shimmering dresses and lilting waltzes. Old times, good friends, and aspirations in the distant homeland.

Nurse Satz, her slim figure silhouetted on the wall from the light of the kerosene lamp, thought she would "go back next autumn."

Sulerjitski, his eyes laughing, joked with her about staying. "You have a sheepskin coat big enough for two of you—lots of rice, potatoes and tea. And Dukhobor psalms almost everyday. What more do you want?" he asked.

"In Russia there is work to be done," said Bonch-Bruivich. "There is a bureaucracy to be torn down and a democracy to put in its place."

"You have parliamentary government here in Canada," said Sulerjitski. "Freedom to say and write what you like. None of Nikolai's secret police. No fear of exile."

"But here we are all exiles," Bonch-Bruivich shrugged. "All four of us. Exiled from Russian music, Russian art—from Russians. I want a Russia with freedom and a government for the people, schools and farm machinery for the peasants."

"That would mean a lot of trouble. I have a much simpler plan. Become a Dukhobor Christ. That is an art, making democracy as unnecessary as literacy," laughed Sulerjitski.

Dr. Vera hummed a lively tune, "Come," she smiled, "let's sing, there will be time yet to make the revolution."

Outside, a sharp wind, blowing shreds of smoke from the village chimneys, drove a swirl of powdery snow along the street. A Dukhobor, lantern in hand, latched a stable door and turned toward his house. He stopped, pushing his sheepskin hat from

his ears, and listened. On the whirl of the wind came the rollicking notes of the *kvariet*. "It is not good when our 'guides' sing such worldly songs," he muttered.

A coyote howled, its last eerie cry blending with the north wind.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

MUCH TROUBLE

THE SILENT FOREST awakened to the clip of axes as Nikolai Zibaroff, with a hundred men, cut a lane through spruce and poplar to the new town of Swan River. While a crew with oxen and horses hauled the nearest logs back to the villages of Thunder Hill, Zibaroff and his men in Swan River built a communal stable and a communal warehouse.

A Russian had donated \$2,000 toward stocking the communal warehouse and for the opening of a co-operative store in Mikhaelovka village. And now in Swan River a boxcar of goods from Winnipeg waited on the railway siding. The Dukhobors pushed and pulled this red *vagon* along the track to the big door of their new warehouse. One of them pried the metal seal from the car door, everyone waiting expectantly. With a thunderous rumble the great door slid open along its iron track. Inside they went among the packing cases, barrels, kegs and burlap sacks, like children entering an immense Christmas stocking.

"In the bolshoi boxes is the cloth for the women," Zibaroff pointed.

"And here are plowshares." Anton felt the blue blades of steel, tied together with wire.

"And nails for building."

"Leather for boots."

With an almost merry zeal the car was emptied into the warehouse, at the side door of which waited sleighs to take some of these valuable possessions immediately to the new co-operative store in Mikhaelovka.

But the opening of the store in the village was frowned upon by two divergent factions, retail merchants of Swan River who feared loss of business, and Dukhobors who believed "It is not Christian for a Dukhobor to work in a store." One of the most agitated of the Dukhobor opposition was Zibaroff's wife, Ona.

On the morning the store opened, the curious crowd was as interested in the *Kristianski* controversy as in the bolts of cloth and other goods. On a sack of tapioca in a corner sat Ona, biting her anemic lips. Behind the counter stood Zibaroff, his hair damp

with sweat, mustaches drooping, broad back more than ordinarily bent.

"I will have some of that red print," said a woman.

"How much do you want?" asked Zibaroff.

"Eight yards I will need for myself and my children."

He measured out the cloth and tore it neatly with his strong fingers.

Ona, her nose red and wet with tears, sobbed audibly.

"Why do you cry, Ona? What is wrong?" asked Zibaroff in a distressed but kindly voice.

"It is not right," she wailed. "It is not Christian for one of us to be a trader."

"This I am doing for the good of the people. Can you not understand? Someone must do it."

"But it is not Christian to be a trader," she sobbed.

The woman with her red print drew back into the crowd of faces looking out from their shawls and sheepskin hats; faces sedulously concerned with the drama, some sincerely perturbed, a few certain that Zibaroff was right, others maliciously pleased at the controversy.

Zibaroff, his forehead furrowed, explained he was "not a trader." The co-operative store was not to profit from the toil of the people. It was to help them save their hard-earned money.

"Is it not better," he reasoned with them "to have *our* store and *me* working in it? Is this not better than *you* buying your cloth from the other kind of merchant?"

But Ona continued to sob.

Zibaroff sighed. Deep wrinkles in his tired face told the story of continuous struggle for the flock, climaxed by rebuffs even from his own family.

He went on working in the store, receiving no salary and little gratitude. Many criticized, some said nothing. A few had it in them to support the project; all came to the store to get their share of the goods.

A woman, whose husband was jealous of Zibaroff's accomplishments, left the store with a sackful of goods under her arm. Meeting Ona, she smugly accused, "Your husband Nikolai is now a kulak trader. What right has *he* to call himself a Christian?"

"Oh, oh," replied Ona, "it is all very sad, I do not know what to do."

Sulerjitski and Bonch-Bruivich, looked upon as foreigners by

Christian zealots and hypocrites alike, were unable to bring reason to bear on the subject.

Sulerjitski asked a Dukhobor leaving the store with a jug of kerosene if he liked the new store.

"D-ah, ye-s," he replied hesitantly.

"Do you think it is a good thing?" Sulerjitski asked.

"It is good there is a store. But"—ponderously shifting his weight from one foot to the other—"it is not right for a Christian to work in the store. According to Christian laws, *we* should not do such things. So it is not right for Nikolai to do it."

"Who then, in your opinion, should work in the store?"

"Well, maybe some of those who are not ours. Not Christians; like Vladimir Bonch-Bruivich, or possibly yourself."

This was the finishing touch for Sulerjitski; he made plans to return to Russia. In similar fashion Dukhobors drove Bonch-Bruivich, the Russian doctor, and the nurses from their midst. When one of the Russians asked why it had been right for Peter Verigin to work in his father's store, the answers were, "Well, that was different," or, "We don't know," or, "It was before we began the new life."

In the South Colony with its "rich" and "poor," and where there was no elder with the ability of Zibaroff, many had not sufficient food for the winter. Scurvy and anemia were common and when their plight was made known, several associations came to their assistance. The largest contribution of \$30,000 was made by the Society of Friends (Quakers) of Philadelphia. Supplies assembled at Yorkton included one boxcar of sugar, four cars of corn meal, one of rolled oats, one of onions, about three cars of potatoes, and cars containing wool, yarn, leather, lamps, tea, linseed oil, and three hundred spinning wheels. The money also enabled the Dukhobors to purchase twenty more oxen and forty-nine cows for milking.

As assistance reached the villages, one effect of it was to halt the tendency away from communal life. There were many who, though opposed to communal ownership, nevertheless desired to share in contributions from non-Dukhobor sources.

But the drift toward individual and one-family ownership of livestock, implements, food, continued. Nor was it only the "selfish rich" who sought to live independently of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. Bonch-Bruivich had observed that there were those who wished to escape the moral coercion of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood.

"Already, towards the end of 1899," Bonch-Bruivich wrote under the name of "Olhovsky" in a series of articles later published in the Russian periodical *Obrazovanie*, "I made acquaintance with some Dukhobors who, having thought deeply and having observed the lives of other people in Canada, and having read a little, had come to the conclusion that all rites are useless, including even the Dukhobor rites; and that it is useless to go to Sunday meetings, for these are also a ceremony. They had become convinced that all men are made alike and are born equals; that there are no 'chosen people,' such as they had esteemed their own sect to be, and that Dukhoborism is far from being 'freedom,' but represents shackles rather, and that a far freer life is possible. The proselytes of this new movement were noted, and were subjected to the persecution of public opinion; and now these really advanced thinkers are obliged to leave the Dukhobor groups and to settle on separate farms. No doubt with the growth of true, free enlightenment, such cases of 'perversion' will become more frequent."

In the North Saskatchewan River Colony the tendency away from communal ownership was still more marked, though all lived in villages as in the other colonies. In some villages the houses were built by communal effort of the inhabitants, the heads of families then drawing pieces of paper from a hat to decide who should have this or that house. In other villages each family built its own house; thus, families having the fewest able-bodied men and women, the least money—and the most old folks and children—had also the poorest and smallest houses.

Early in 1900, more than 2,000 had abandoned communal ownership, while of the remainder—more than 5,000 men, women and children—lived under various degrees of it. Of the 5,000 communal adherents, Bonch-Bruivich estimated that more than 3,000 desired individual or one-family ownership when it should become economically feasible.

In all villages of the three colonies, individuals owned their own clothes regardless of the degree of communal ownership or lack of it.

In 1900, the question of how the land should be owned became a problem to all the Dukhobors. The Canadian Homestead Act required that each quarter section (160 acres) of the 270,480 acres of land set aside for the Dukhobors should be entered in the name of a male Dukhobor over eighteen years of age. And further,

after a lapse of three years from that date, each such Dukhobor should take the oath of allegiance to the British Crown, in order that he receive legal title to his quarter section. Then, in accord with the arrangements made on behalf of the Dukhobors by Aylmer Maude, the deferred payment to the Canadian government of \$10 for each quarter section would become due. These government stipulations had, of course, been made known to the Dukhobors prior to exodus from Russia and entry into Canada; but now they were suspicious of the land laws, though Arthur St. John and Herbert Archer spent days explaining to them that compliance with the laws would not mean that each male Dukhobor over the age of eighteen would have to move out of his village and live the lonely life of a prairie homesteader squatted in the middle of his quarter section. The village habit was deeply rooted in the Dukhobors. Even those who desired individual ownership of everything, shrank from abandoning the village. Most of those who now had individual ownership were afraid to deal directly with a "government." Even they wanted the Canadian government to grant the land "to all the brothers and sisters, and we ourselves will then divide it among us." Suspicious as they were of one another, the majority had more faith in the "brothers" than in the Canadian government.

The faithful longed for Peter Verigin to "come here and tell us what to do." They petitioned Quakers in England and the United States to "help our poor brothers who are living in exile in harsh Siberia, to join us in Canada where they too may live peacefully in the Spirit of Christ."

In letters from him there was nothing specific about land laws, payment of taxes, registration of births, marriages and deaths. Peter did not give positive advice concerning anything. "Do not," was the spirit of his epistles. "Do not go in for large buildings . . . Do not immerse yourselves in husbandry . . . We must settle permanently where Christ wills, slava Bohu." Such letters caused the Dukhobors to think that Verigin did not wish them to make agreements with the Canadian government about anything. Some of the anticomunal Dukhobors took advantage of Verigin's vagueness to declare that "Petushka no longer wishes us to own everything in common anymore. He wishes us to wait until he comes, then he will tell us what to do."

To add to the confusion, the Dukhobors received a lengthy letter from Leo Tolstoy (written from Moscow, February 27,

1900 n.s.) in which he exhorted the "dear brothers and sisters in Christ" to live communally and hold everything in common.

You suffered and were exiled, and still are suffering want, because you wished, not in words but in deeds, to lead a Christian life. [Tolstoy wrote] You refused to do any violence to your neighbors, to take oaths, to serve as police or soldiers; and you even burnt your weapons lest you should be tempted to use them in self-defence; and in spite of all persecutions you remained true to the Christian teaching. Your deeds became known, and the enemies of the Christian teaching were troubled when they heard of them, and they arrested and transported you, and then exiled you from Russia—seeking as much as possible to prevent your example from becoming known. Those who accept the Christian teaching were glad and triumphed; and they loved and praised you, and tried to follow in your footsteps. Your deeds helped much to destroy the dominion of evil, and to confirm men in Christian truth.

Now, however, I learn by letters from our friends, that the life of many of you in Canada is such that the friends of the Christian teaching are confounded, and its enemies rejoice in triumph. "See now—these are your Dukhobors!" say the enemies of Christianity. As soon as they reached Canada, a free country, they begin to live like other people, and to gather property each for himself. So that, evidently, all they did before was only done at their leader's order, and without their well knowing why they did it.

Dear brothers and sisters, I know and understand the difficulty of your position in a foreign country, among strangers who give no one anything freely, and I know how terrible it is to think that those near to one, and the weak ones of one's own family, may remain destitute and lacking support. I know how difficult it is to live in community, and how hard it is to work for others who are not industrious, and who consume what they do not earn. All this I know; but I also know that if you wish to continue to live a Christian life, and do not wish to disavow all for the sake of which you suffered and were exiled from your fatherland, then you must not live as the world lives, each accumulating property separately for himself and his own family, and withholding it from others. It only seems as if it were possible to be a Christian and yet to have property and withhold it from others, but, really, this is impossible. If once such a thing be admitted, very soon nothing of Christianity will be left except empty words—and words, alas! that will be insincere and hypocritical. Christ said that one cannot serve God and Mammon; one of the two—either gather for yourself property, or live by God. At first it seems as if there were no contradiction between the renunciation of violence and refusal of military service on the

one hand, and the recognition of private property on the other. "We Christians do not bow down before external gods; do not take oaths; do not go to law; do not kill," say many among us, "and when by our own labor we obtain property—we not only do not transgress the teaching of Christ, but we even obey it if from our superfluity we help the destitute." But this is not true. In reality, property means that what I consider mine, I not only will not give to whoever wishes to take it, but will defend it from him. And to defend from another what I consider mine is only possible by violence; that is—in case of need—by a struggle, a fight, or even by murder. Were it not for this violence and these murders, no one would be able to hold property. . . .

Therefore, to acknowledge property is to acknowledge violence and murder; and to acknowledge property, which is only maintainable by soldiers and police, there was no need for you to refuse military or police service. . . .

Moreover, partiality to property is in itself a snare, and Christ shows it is so. He says that man should not take care for the morrow . . . because, such care leads to nothing . . . Man cannot secure himself; first, because he is mortal—as shown in the Gospel parable of the rich man who built barns—and, secondly, because one can never find the limit of security required . . . Like the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, he is secured, once for all, by God . . .

Tolstoy's letter continued on in this strain for almost another 1,500 words. And after urging the Dukhobors to work hard, and commending the "detailed arrangements" of communal living to the wisdom of themselves and their elders, he signed himself,

Farewell,
Your loving brother,
LEO TOLSTOY

The epistle was variously interpreted. Some thought that he had found out their leader, Peter Verigin, was Christ. "So when Grandfather Leo Nikolaivich mentions Christ in his letter, he means Petushka."

"Da, it must be so. Does not Leo Nikolaivich say that we did everything because our leader told us to?"

"Pravda," agreed another, "Petushka has told Leo Nikolaivich everything, so that everything that Leo Nikolaivich writes to us is what Petushka would have us do. Petushka told us not to make large buildings, and Grandfather warns us now that we should not build large barns."

The supporters of this interpretation flaunted it in the face of the "brothers who do not wish to live as Christians, who do not wish to share everything."

The anticommunal brothers replied, "Petushka has not told Leo Nikolaivich everything." Probably Peter Verigin was not even aware of what Tolstoy had written, said they.

"Possibly Leo Nikolaivich is not allowed to write what he means. Possibly the Tsar will not let him. So, he had to write the opposite of what he means. And so he means we should not live in the communal way, but each own everything for ourselves instead," said one.

"Tolstoy means that we should not sign for our land separately," insisted Melosha Kanigan. "To do that would be to own the land in a way not Christian. He also says that we should not swear oaths. That we already know. But the Englishmen, Archer and St. John, both tell us that we must swear oaths to the English King, before we can have our land. And that we know we cannot do."

Zibaroff said that Grandfather's letter was "very plain. He means that we should live the Christian way, owning everything in common, just as Petushka once told us we should in his letter."

There were a few Dukhobors who thought the "advice" to mean that they should "live as the flowers of the fields, and birds of the air, and the animals who own nothing—not even wearing clothes." In such a manner would it be possible to live freely in the Spirit of Christ, owning nothing.

And so Tolstoy, with his literary powers of persuasion driving his philosophy of nonviolence toward an ultimate abstraction, left his "dear brothers and sisters" more than ever confounded.

Increasing the confusion, Alexander Bodianski arrived in Canada to live among the Dukhobors. Bodianski, a scholastically educated Russian with enough money to indulge in theory weaving, had written letters of advice to the Dukhobors. He felt, however, that from a distance he could not successfully impart "God's truth," so he came to agitate "that the earth is God's," and that, in consequence of God's ownership, it was neither necessary nor right for human beings to pretend ownership of land.

Bodianski had little difficulty in talking most of the Dukhobors out of applying for their homestead land in accord with the Canadian land laws. Opposed to "making private property of God's earth," he compiled epistles to the government, which Dukhobors willingly signed. "There is no justification," ran one

of these, "for a man who, knowing the Law of God, takes as his own that which was not produced by his labor, but was created by God for the use of all men. There is no justification for a man who, knowing the Law of God, makes private property of land."

This and similar pronouncements suited many of the Dukhobors, who now informed Arthur St. John and Herbert Archer that "we cannot sign papers with the Canadian government when to do so would be against the Law of God." But the land laws of their "God" and Bodianski did not stop some Dukhobors from trying to oust a non-Dukhobor homesteader from land which the Dukhobors considered their own territory.

This perplexing combination of zealotry and peasant slyness was confusing in the extreme to Canadian government officials who decided to "wait and see," in the hope that the Dukhobors would "get over" their strange ideas about God and land.

It was difficult for Canadians to understand the "madness" of the Dukhobors; as difficult as it was for the Dukhobors to understand "madness" foreign to themselves. The Dukhobors, a gregarious people, were unable to comprehend "why the 'Englishmen' live alone, each on their separate farms, having no village, sometimes not even a family nor wife."

In March, 1900, a month on the prairie when weather is more than ordinarily deceitful and tempestuous, two Dukhobors had a sad experience with a lone homesteader, gone mad. The two, a grandfather and a lad, were visiting in a village of the South Colony, near Devil's Lake. For several days they waited for a snowstorm to end before they would attempt to return to their own village.

One evening the wind died with characteristic suddenness and the temperature rose above zero. By noon of the following day the snow was soft underfoot, while the sky was as blue as a robin's egg, except for a bank of cloud on the southwest horizon.

"It is a good day to go home," said Grandfather Soma, watching drops of water glisten from steaming eaves.

They left after noon, in a freshening breeze, but they had not gone far before gray clouds scudded across the sun and small flakes of snow rode on the wind. By six o'clock it was becoming dark; their clothes were damp from sweat and snow. Grandfather Soma was tired, and they both knew they had missed the signs—upright sticks with tufts of grass—which indicated the way to their village.

Through the darkness they went on; the young one ahead,

punching deep holes in the drifting snow with each step, and Grandfather Soma trying to step in them to conserve his ebbing strength. The wind became colder, freezing their outside clothes, but Grandfather felt warmer, though tired. Sinking down in the snow, he would rest for a little while. Driven snow swirled about his sheepskin hat and over his felt boots, but it was very comfortable to rest.

The lad stopped, not hearing the crunch of footsteps behind him, and shouted, "Grandfather! Grandfather Soma!"

His shout was answered only by the harsh sighing of the wind and the howl of a coyote. On the wind came an answering howl. The lad shivered from physical cold and man's age-old fear of the howl of the wolf at night.

He searched out his own tracks and trudged back to find the old man sleeping as peacefully as if he were in his own feather bed at home. The lad got him to his feet and took his arm over one shoulder. They stumbled on for half an hour or more.

When he was almost as exhausted as Grandfather, they saw a light from a house. Slava Bohu. They smelled the wood smoke, and a dog barked. Beside the frosted window was a door through which they stumbled; warm air and a pleasant kitchen odor greeted them. The old man sank down on a bench by the door, while the lad gaped at the haggard threatening face of a homesteader.

"We are lost," he said in Russian. "We want to stay until sunrise," pointing at himself and then at Soma, who had slipped to the floor. "Tomorrow, go home," he added in English.

The madman pointed to the door. "Tomorrow! Home! Hell!" he shouted, coming closer.

The lad, tears in his frightened eyes, knelt down, and, touching his forehead to the floor, implored that they be allowed to stay.

Their host did not answer, but striding to the stove grasped the poker.

The lad retreated through the door, dragging Soma after him.

The door slammed, shutting off the patch of lamplight. The wind went clammily through their clothes. It was no longer snowing, but colder.

"There is a stable, Grandfather," the boy said. "We will stay there until morning, slava Bohu!"

Inside the stable was a smell of warm horses and hay, but the dog was there and he growled and barked. There was a fumbling at the latch, and the door squealed open on its frosty hinges. It

was the homesteader with a steaming lantern in one hand, and a rifle in the other. Again he drove them into the snow.

The temperature was dropping with the wind, and the moon gleamed through a rift in the clouds. The frozen crust of snow tore at their boots with each step, and their clothes scraped together with a noise like screen wire. Soma could no longer keep his arm over the lad's shoulder, and he collapsed in the snow. "You, my dear, go on, and send for me. It is very nice here."

The lad carried him for a few zigzagging steps, the old fellow muttering about the sunrise. Exhausted the young one stumbled on alone. How he got back to his village, he himself could not remember.

When the sun rose that morning, men from the village found Grandfather Soma. His sheepskin hat had been dragged from his head, and part of his nose was gone.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

WHAT TO DO?

BY MAY, 1900, THE LAST SHRUNKEN snowbanks, hiding in the thickets, had melted to swell the water of the sloughs. Poplar trees, relaxing from April's sleety winds, stretched their leafless branches in the sun, and the gray buds of the willows opened in green. In the sloughs, already fringed with grass, frogs sang of spring. Crows, ragged and black against the blue sky, announced it with noisy cawing, and meadow larks welcomed it in song.

The Dukhobors responded to the spring with optimism. Singing and hard work, temporarily submerged economic dissension and millenium-seeking. Since the frost left the ground, they had been plowing. They owned more horses and oxen. The government had advanced money for seed grain, and they sowed it, mostly by hand, as they had so often done in Russia. Again, younger men left the villages to find work.

Hospitality of the Dukhobors toward their own and "foreigners" varied in accord with the attitude of inhabitants and elders. In some villages, strangers, should they pass that way, were welcomed with food and lodging. In other villages, even "brothers and sisters" were not received with enthusiasm.

Like most Thunder Hill people, the inhabitants of Mikhaelovka village were hospitable. When an Englishman with his wife and children drove to the opposite bank and beckoned to Dukhobors to help them across, they launched their ferry in the dangerously swollen stream. The Englishman understood no Russian, and they hardly more English than "No, yes, good, bad," but he had little difficulty in making them understand he must cross with his family. First, the Dukhobors took the passengers safely over, then the horses, and on the third trip brought the democrat. Then they stood waiting for the Englishman to drive away, but he, thinking they wished for payment, offered a two-dollar bill.

"Nyet," said a Dukhobor, shaking his head.

He offered \$5, and when they would not accept this, he raised it to \$10. He became annoyed, and followed them into the village where there was an interpreter, who explained that they could not accept money for a Christian act.

"Strange people," the Englishman remarked to his wife as they drove away, "I had heard they were tremendously keen on money."

In the summer, when the river was lower, an Indian with his wife and five children in a dilapidated light wagon pulled by one gaunt horse, became stuck in the river. Some Dukhobor boys ran to the village for help. Men came with a rope and pulled the conveyance to the bank. The Indian, as was the custom with his ancestors, put his hand over his heart and bowed his thanks. The Dukhobors bowed in return, whereupon the Indian bowed again, one of the Dukhobors remarking that "the Indian bows almost like a Christian." By signs the Dukhobors tried to make the Indian understand that he with his family should come into the village for a meal. But the Indian, possibly because he was not hungry enough for the ordeal of sitting at a table, spread his hands over his belly, then pointed to his throat in such a way as to indicate he was not hungry. While this pantomime was proceeding, a Dukhobor returned from a near-by house with potatoes and salt. These practical symbols of good health they put in the Indian's democrat, wishing him and his family a good journey. The Indian and his wife smiled their thanks, he standing up in the wagon to bow a last farewell.

"Indians are nice people," Ivan remarked. "They do not steal or make trouble for anyone. But they would be better if they would stay on their land."

"Da. Always they are going somewhere with a horse, and so they have no time to wash their clothes," said a woman.

The wild hay crop was good in the summer of 1900. Late in July and early in August when the sun beat down on the meadows, men, women and children made hay for winter feed. Near a village of Thunder Hill Colony lived a Canadian homesteader who became ill and could not stack his hay. He had no help, so it lay on the ground where it was cut. The Dukhobors heard of his plight and came with rakes and forks.

When his wife saw them approaching, she thought they had come to steal the hay, but she did not tell her husband because he was too ill to get out of bed.

The Dukhobors stacked the hay, and went away again without going to the house.

Some days went by; the hay was still there. The homesteader got well and went to the Dukhobor village, thinking they would want pay for their work. The Dukhobors would accept no money.

Something else happened in a meadow. Some Dukhobor children were playing in a hayfield near an Irishman's homestead. The homesteader's young son, romping with them in the hay, was bumped and ran home crying to his father. So enraged was the father, that these "bohunk" children had caused his child to cry that he rushed to the hayfield. It was deserted except for one Dukhobor boy who had been there for the romping. The Irishman kicked this child, and he died from the blow.

The Dukhobor villagers requested Arthur St. John to write to the North West Mounted Police, asking the authorities not to punish the homesteader. "We believe he is already punished by his own conscience," they said. "Already one has been killed and, to us, it would appear more terrible to take another life"

That autumn the Dukhobors harvested their first crop in Canada, small as it was, and faced the winter with more food, clothing and confidence than they had had a year ago. In the North Saskatchewan River Colony, and to a lesser extent in the South Colony, there was some compliance with the Canadian land laws. In Thunder Hill, few complied. Zibaroff, who could not write, and who showed increasing signs of disturbance within himself, opposed the signing of papers and making oaths "which might lead to military conscription." Besides, he feared that compliance with the Canadian land laws would mean another disintegrating influence. Despite the opposition to his co-operative store, which had ceased to function, his influence in Thunder Hill was great. In the village of Voznesenie where he lived, the villagers voted to "divide up all the flour now," instead of keeping any of it in the communal warehouse. Zibaroff, who saw this as a blow to communal ownership, threatened to move away with his supporters. The villagers decided to leave the flour in the warehouse.

Bodianski, the educated theorizer and zealot, continued to stir up the Dukhobors of Thunder Hill and South colonies against making private property of "God's earth." In February, 1901, he issued an "Address to All People," in which there was much disapproval of Canadian laws. Copies of the address, signed by Dukhobors, were sent to the governments of many countries, inquiring, "Whether there is anywhere such a country and such a human society, where we would be tolerated, and where we could make our living, without being obliged to break the demands of conscience and Truth."

Bodianski, linguist besides Utopia seeker, wrote a special appeal

to the Sultan of Turkey, which a number of Dukhobors signed. These epistles, in some instances, found their way into newspapers of various countries, with a result that many idealists took up their pens in defense of the "simple and God-fearing Russian peasants who are being persecuted by the Canadian government." Bodianski was enjoying himself. Not since he had gone bearded and barefooted through the East End of London to refuse a legacy, had he had such an opportunity to draw attention to his "principles."

Finally Bodianski tired of the game and—described now by Dukhobors as "an obstinate old man who always twist things his own way"—left Canada for California, where he had business interests which added to his monetary wealth.

In California, perhaps soberly reflecting his proselytizing, he wrote in a moment of lucidity: "I expect the Dukhobors will in time have all they need . . . but it will be not till the initiative comes from men of their own group, prompted to such undertakings by experience of life. No initiative from outside can give them anything. No more impenetrable group of people exist than the Dukhobors."

The Dukhobors continued to petition the Quakers in England and the United States and their admirers scattered throughout the world, "to ask the Tsar to let our brothers and sisters, suffering in exile in harsh Siberia, come to live peacefully with us in Canada." In these petitions they did not disclose that they especially desired Peter Verigin to come to them. Friends of the Dukhobors approached Lord Strathcona, high commissioner for Canada in England, and he discussed with the British government the feasibility of making representations to Russia for the release of the exiles. The British embassy at St. Petersburg was instructed to take up the case. About the same time, a similar request was made through the Russian consulate in Montreal. But the Tsar's government refused to allow the exiles to leave Russia. It promised, however, that certain wives and children in Canada would be allowed to settle with their husbands and fathers in the province of Yakutsk, Siberia.

Gregori Verigin, Peter's brother, did not wait for the British government to complete negotiations with the Russian government. With Peter Shukin, he escaped from Siberia and boarded a ship for England. Once there he became frightened that the English soldiers might discover him to be a fugitive and deliver him to the soldiers of the Tsar. What to do? By chance, he met

Jukov, a Russian Jew, who heard his story and took him to Aylmer Maude's home, where Mrs. Maude, whose admiration for the peasants and the simple life led her to dress as one, "was very easy to talk with, and very nice, entertaining us over a samovar." In half an hour Maude came home, "a nice man, also speaking Russian."

Maude took Gregori and Peter Shukin to London, and purchased transportation for them to Saskatoon, Canada. "We promised," Gregori wrote later, "that when we would reach the brothers in Canada, we would return his money, but he would not listen to this."

In the North Saskatchewan River Colony, where a number of men had complied with the land laws by filing on quarter sections individually, Vasili Veraschagin, an elder, commended Canada.

"Here in Canada," said Vasili, "we believe a man cannot be left without bread. In the first place, Canada allows full liberty, and we have been granted freedom from military service. Secondly, freedom of religious belief is allowed. Yes, and in Canada there are many different nationalities, and all have full liberty. Thirdly, in Canada, things are, one may say, based on God's Law; for instance the freehold land is sold for about seven cents an acre.*

"In the fourth place, the Canadian people live very peacefully; they do not rob or murder one another. Fifthly, in Canada, a plain workman, working ten hours, earns as much as \$1.50 or \$2, and there is much else which might be said."

But Gregori Makaroff went too far and was frowned on. Not only did he sign for his quarter section, but he insisted on working *his* land himself, refusing altogether to work communally. Besides, he said that he would send his children to school so that they would have not only "simple literacy, but a whole education as well." Makaroff had brought some money with him to Canada, together with rich Turkish carpets from the city of Kars; now he supplemented his shrewdness with a calculating independence that provoked the North Saskatchewan River people. He would not take his "share" of donations sent by Quakers and others. The only communal thing he continued to do was to live in the village of Petrofka on the rolling wooded banks of the winding Saskatchewan River.

* A reference to the government homestead fee of \$10 per one hundred and sixty acres.

"No-Dukhobor, kulak," the villagers called him, following him to his field and unhitching his horses three times. But Gregori Makaroff, broad-backed, blue-eyed, with a slight stoop like the droop of his mustaches, hitched his horses again and went on with his work. Not to be a soldier, not to smoke tobacco; to have borsch soup and the Ruski banya—these things were all that he could have in common with the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood.

The North Saskatchewan River folk went as far south as Saskatoon to purchase supplies. The town had a population of about one hundred people. James Clinkskill, leading merchant there, could not speak a word of Russian, but he had traded with the Indians at Battleford and understood their sign language. Thus when a Dukhobor came into the store, put his two forefingers to his head like horns on a cow, went through the motion of milking, then poured the imaginary milk into an imaginary pail and churned it, Clinkskill knew the man wanted to buy butter. He found them honest, but hard bargainers. They must have been accustomed to bartering, he thought, for they invariably said "too much," offering to pay half the price asked.

Mrs. Eliza H. Varney, the Quaker who volunteered her services as nurse among the Dukhobors in 1899, was in 1900 joined by her niece, Miss Nellie Baker of Toronto. The two women lived in a tent in the South Colony. In an adjacent tent, Nellie Baker opened a school to which came a few children. Nellie Baker knew no Russian, and at first the children could not speak English, but she found them apt pupils.

In the summer of 1902, Joseph Elkington, son of the older Quaker who met the first shipload of Dukhobors at Halifax, visited the people. The younger Elkington was greatly impressed with their hospitality, kindness, and truly Christian spirit. "A people who will not fight, or steal, or drink anything intoxicating, or smoke, or use profane language, or lie, have a character which will bring forth the best qualities of Christian citizenship," he wrote the following year in his book *The Doukhobors*. He found "false teachings" among them which, he attributed, in part, to "their ignorance of the Bible."

In 1902 Michael Sherbinin, was still teaching school in the North Saskatchewan River Colony, and Nurse Boyle was there. Helen Morland of England taught school in the South Colony.

Bodianski's book, *New Chapters of the Dukhobor Epic*, written under the name of P. A. Tverskoy, received wide publicity in

Russia. In it, he insinuated that Prince Hilkov and McCreary, the immigration commissioner, had stolen the government bonus fund of \$35,000, which should have gone to the Dukhobors. These and other irresponsible allegations were avidly read in Russia by "friends" of the Dukhobors and officials of the Tsarist government. The "friends" were able to continue thinking of the Dukhobors as "Christian martyrs," even in Canada, while Russian officials were pleased to say, "We did not treat them so badly. See what is happening to them in Canada."

Christian martyrdom stories appeared in French, Scandinavian, Swiss, Turkish and German periodicals. Christians, Jews, Turks and ardent saviors of various cults, sects, creeds and isms, wrote epistles of condolence and advice to the Dukhobors, asking for letters in return. The few Dukhobors who could write in Russian were pressed into replying. Imaginative stores were, from time to time, published in whole or reflected in English newspapers, causing indignant epistles against the Canadian government.

This was a brand of fantasia and intrigue in which Canadian politicians were unschooled. They knew how to "plug" a school-house meeting, how to involve railways in politics, how to manage a number of things familiar to themselves, but they were as much at a loss to unravel the Dukhobor enigma as the average Rotarian, Orangeman or bank manager would be at penetrating the "soul of India."

Harley, immigration agent at Swan River, had been sent to the Thunder Hill village of Voznesenie, on December 28, 1901, in a fruitless attempt to persuade the men between the ages of eighteen and sixty to sign individually for quarter sections of land. According to a Dukhobor version of the meeting, "the official became so angry that he trembled all over, bounced on his chair, saying: 'Have you come here to alter the laws of Canada?'"

"If you," replied the Dukhobor spokesman, "cannot alter your own selfish human laws, it is many times more hard and terrible for us to alter the Laws of God."

The official thought awhile and again became angry, "and so we went on for five hours . . ." and "so we drove away; not knowing what will come of it all."

Vladimir Tchertkov, Tolstoy's nominee in England, who had assured the Canadian government that the Dukhobors would prove excellent settlers, and who was conversant with the Canadian laws, now published a *Handbook* and sent copies to the Dukhobors in

Canada. Tchertkov's *Handbook* in Russian and English languages was to help them learn English and guide them in their morals. The Dukhobors received its contents with great interest. A few excerpts follow:

We think there ought not to exist any private property of land. In our opinion, land, like air and water, should be for the use of all. He owns the land, who, for the time being is working it. . . . On the land question many and learned people have written and disputed much. . . . About the land question it is useful to read the writings of two men—the American Henry George, and our Russian Leo Tolstoy.

. . . the registration of marriages, births and deaths. Do you promise always to fulfill this? We are quite willing to answer accurately when asked. But we cannot promise anything. A promise is the same as an oath. Christ said, "Do not swear." A man must be free.

All governments are based on violence. They are upheld by armies, law courts, prisons and police.

Tchertkov (on Pages 49 to 52 of this *Handbook*) eulogized the North American Indians, blaming Europeans for their downfall:

There was a time when the Indians were a great and powerful people. They had great intellectual development, and the rules of their morality were very elevated . . .

Tchertkov's *Handbook* added to the confusion among the Dukhobors, but *Verigin's Letters* (some fifty-five letters by and to Peter Vasilivich Verigin and subsequently collected by Vladimir Bonch-Bruivich, who had them published in Russian language by the Ukrainian Press, Geneva, Switzerland), were much more effective. Verigin had not written these letters as a guide to his followers. Many of the epistles he had composed, when having little else to do, to Russian intellectuals, dreamers, millenium-seekers, and zealots of one kind and another.

However, in the summer of 1902, neatly bound volumes of Bonch-Bruivich's *Verigin's Letters* reached the faithful in Canada.

"Pravda," a zealot declared, "this is the way Petushka has found to tell us all what to do. He could not write to us directly from *Sibirski*, because the Tsar would find out everything. But

he has asked Grandfather Leo Nikolaivich Tolstoy's followers to send us this book."

With avid reverence the faithful pored over Peter Verigin's abstractions, planning forthwith to put into practice "his word."

In the North Saskatchewan River Colony they came to the conclusion "it is wrong to kill our brothers, the gophers," even though these prairie rodents ate their grain. So men and women sat patiently by the gopher holes with string snares, and lassoed the little animals; afterwards taking them in boats across the river where they were given their "freedom" in the Mennonite settlement.

This way of overcoming the problem of protecting their crops, while not taking life, seemed hardly fair to their old neighbors, the Mennonites, whose migration to Canada had, in 1872, inaugurated the Canadian order in council allowing freedom from military service to conscientious objectors.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

PILGRIMAGE

VASILI OBEDKOFF, the mild mannered muzhik whom Peter Verigin had once chosen as his devoted man Friday in exile, was called upon in 1902, by the small group of zealots to assist in the revelation of *Verigin's Letters*. After much discussion, he and Ivan Ponamaroff, who also had visited Peter in exile, became apostles. From village to village they went, announcing the approaching millenium, explaining "what Petushka wishes us to do."

A composite theme in Peter's letters, most appealing to Vasili and Ivan, was the existence of a promised land, the "Kingdom of God," wherein the climate was so inviting that all who could reach there would become true Christians living in brotherly and sisterly love in the Spirit of Christ.

In that promised land, somewhere to the south, natural fruits grow on vines and trees ever green. So abundantly do these fruits grow that it is not necessary to "enslave our poor brothers, the animals," in pulling plows, because plows in that place are not necessary. Also, it is unnecessary to keep cows for milk and butter, the luscious fruits providing a variety of food. No animals need ever be killed, because leather boots and sheepskin coats are not necessary there. Even for men and women to work at physical labor is not necessary. Governments, land laws, taxes, schools and mosquitoes are not there. Little is necessary—except contemplation of higher things amidst the living of a truly spiritual life, in harmony with the evergreen fruit trees, gentle rains and sunshine.

How to reach this Kingdom of God?

"We should begin now to live our lives as if we had already found it," proclaimed Vasili Obedkoff. "Have faith; then God will guide us to His promised land. He will care for us along the way, no matter how far we must travel."

In every village of the South and Thunder Hill colonies there was much discussion and argument, some inhabitants openly favoring an immediate trek in the direction of the Kingdom of God.

"There is nothing to stay here for," said Melosha. "We have

trouble among the brothers, we do not agree about how to work and how to divide everything. Here is no Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, and some day the government will take our land from us because we will not bow down to Satan's laws."

"But possibly," said Efrem, "Petushka means if we could free the earth from violence here, this would become the promised land and we would not have to go away to another far-off place?"

"*Ne pravda*, not true," said Ivan Ponamaroff, "it is not possible to have a Kingdom of God where the earth is ruled by a man-made government."

Yet Ponamaroff was not a man to leave everything to Faith and God. Into his exhortations he injected a note of politics, saying "that if all the brothers and sisters would unite in one bolshoi pilgrimage for the promised land, the Canadian government, seeing this, will surely transport us to a warmer country."

In some villages the majority of the inhabitants were so opposed to seeking the promised land at the risk of losing their hard-won homes, that they chased the apostles away. But everywhere the venture was being argued over, even in the North Saskatchewan River Colony where there was least sympathy with it.

The South Colony village of Truzdenia became a center for the movement, and Alex Mikhaelovich Mahortoff became a leading zealot. Disillusioned with the failure of the communes, Alex saw the "advice" in Peter's letters as a solution to surrounding evils. But he was for careful planning, and when some hundred brothers and sisters, in whom had entered the "true Spirit of Christ," met in the village, he wanted to ask the government "to allow us to drive our animals with us south to a warmer climate where they will have their freedom, too, and without suffering from harsh winters." The animals were not responsible for being in this climate; they had not come of their own accord. They were brought here by humans, said Alex.

"Da," agreed Grandmother Polia, "it would be much better to take the animals with us to the Kingdom of God. It would be very good, for then I could ride there in a wagon. I am sure it is too far to walk."

"People who wish to be 'Sons of God' must give freedom to all creation," Mahortoff continued. "So far all creatures have groaned under harsh hands and are only waiting for the 'Sons of God' to free them."

And so the zealots interpreted, speculated and evangelized.

To quote in full the involved and verbose philosophizing in Verigin's letters from which they drew their inspiration, would require several chapters. Thus brief quotations are confined to abridged excerpts.

Verigin, in his letters, had questioned man's right to enslave animals. He had written:

It is important for me to know; in order to live rightly . . . should we keep cattle? . . . For it is very natural that if fruits exist, man should feed on them. That is my ultimate conviction . . . In another letter, I admit the possibility of advising not to work physically, and yet be sufficiently fed—obtain first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all the rest will be added unto you . . . people should begin to preach Peace and Goodwill . . . the earth freed from the violence of human hands, would begin to abound with all that is ordained for it. . . . And humanity, together with the spiritual stature lost by Adam and Eve, would regain an earthly paradise . . .

I think that the nearer we individually may be to the sun, the better it will be in all respects . . . I consider the proper place of residence to be . . . where the sun, sending its beneficent beams on all that lives, at the same time will influence the brain of man with its vital energy. Man employing food raised by an abundance of solar heat, as for instance, raspberries, strawberries, and in general, so to say, tender fruits—his organism will be formed as it were, of energy itself, because tender fruits, I suppose, contain in themselves very much, as it were, of compressed solar ether, that is to say, warmth energy. . . . Feeding on food that grows, and, as far as possible, on fruits, I see to be advantageous already in this respect, that I shall consume into myself more solar heat, which is energy. And in consequence of that I hope even to be wiser.

Mahortoff and his disciples, in accord with the tradition of secrecy concerning "advice" from their ruler, did not expose the source of their inspiration when they wrote to the government for permission to trek to a warmer climate.

Early in August, while they awaited a reply, they collected their horses, oxen, cattle and sheep, and brought them to a pasture near the village of Truzdenia. To make sure that none of the uninspired brothers would "enslave" them in work, they appointed "Sons of God" to guard them day and night.

When government officials, perplexed with proceedings, sent word "the Sons of God" would not be allowed to trek with their animals to a warmer climate, the zealots were neither unduly surprised nor disappointed. They had anticipated such a reply.

What else could be expected of the man-made government? Petushka had written in one of his letters: "True Christianity from time immemorial has been persecuted, because it is harmful to any and every governmental structure."

The sons and daughters of God, after more discussion, decided the next best thing would be to drive the animals into the forest, some one hundred miles distant, "where they would have their freedom." This they did, to the dismay of the uninspired Dukhobors, who called them mad.

"It is not *we* who are *mad*; it is *you* who are *bad*," replied the Sons of God. "You have not allowed the true word to enter you."

While the zealots, growing in numbers in many villages, discussed what next to do, the government sent men on horseback into the forest to round up the animals. The livestock, consisting of two hundred and eighty-five cattle, one hundred and twenty horses and ninety-five sheep, was sold at public auction, the money from the sale being credited to the Dukhobors' land account under the Homestead Act. What particularly disgusted the "mad" brothers was that the "bad" ones purchased "the animals that we allowed to go free in the forest."

In *Verigin's Letters*, there was a lengthy epistle to a non-Dukhobor theory weaver: "To agree to all the demands of Caesar's 'organizations,' means to take part in their doings; and their doings we see are not good. Money we consider ourselves bound to return to them . . . as much as they may demand . . . because these tokens are devised by them."

A number of the zealots decided that in accord with this "advice" they must "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." The nearest agent of the immigration department "being also Caesar's nearest representative," they handed over their money to him. The money was credited to the Dukhobors' land account under the Homestead Act.

The true sons and daughters of freedom decided everything made from leather must be destroyed. So they brought their boots, fur coats, harness and horse collars to appointed places and burned "these unnecessary things," just as they had burned their guns and swords in Caucasia. Now they wore only rubbers on their feet, and many went barefooted, preaching through the villages. Next, the men cut the metal hooks from their clothing and women threw their needles into the stoves. Had not Verigin meant that men tormented in mines could not lead a peaceful and tranquil

life? Therefore in using the iron from the mines "we will never free ourselves from contemporary civilization."

Many of the zealots decided that all work was sinful, for Verigin had written: ". . . and we see that Christ did no physical work, nor did the Apostles . . . In order to be true followers of Christ, it is chiefly necessary to go out and preach the Gospel of truth, and one may beg bread for the body. Remember that the Apostles, passing through the field 'plucked the ears of corn and ate.' If any wish to labor, let them do so; but our duty is to labor only in Christ's service . . . And if it is supposed that such a life is only possible for a limited number of people—that again is incorrect. Is it conceivable that Christ called the Apostles to such a life and then, seeing the whole or the half of humanity following, would have said 'No, there are too many of you?' Perfection, or holiness, cannot be regarded as only meant for exceptional people; it is the portion of every man."

Burning horse collars, going barefooted and growing beards became too much for Vasili Obedkoff. He, who had been among the first zealots, now questioned these things that were being done. Without physical labor he saw disaster ahead, instead of the promised land.

"God said," said Vasili, "by the sweat of our brows we must earn our daily bread. How is it possible to go against God's law and yet find the Kingdom of Heaven?"

"That is not what Petushka has written," replied Ilarion, lugging his boots, a set of harness and an axe to the fire. "You are not true to our leader. No one knows better than Petushka."

"But Petushka also wrote that he himself works at physical labor," Vasili protested. "If you burn everything, how then will we live?" In the wrinkles of Vasili's forehead there was sweat, and his eyes were tired and frightened.

"These things," said Ilarion, shaking the harness as if it was a snake, "are things of the Devil, and must be burned as we burned our guns in Caucasia. If you want to desert us for Satan, that is your business, not mine."

What Vasili Obedkoff said about Peter Verigin's letters, was equally true. Peter had written: "I am writing a very short letter because my time is taken up in physical labor . . ." In another letter: "Our blacksmith was arrested, a great man, I several times worked in his shop as a sledgehammer man . . ."

And in other letters, Peter had stressed the need for physical labor. These epistles, along with those in which he decried all

physical labor, were in the same book. But Obedkoff met with little success in his attempts to offset one letter against another. Verigin's letters, like the Holy Bible itself, seemed to provide premises for argument for and against everything. Unable to stem the rising tide of the movement, Obedkoff withdrew. The "mad" brothers told him the Spirit of Christ had left him; the "bad" brothers accused him of starting "this idea of freedom, which will be the ruin of us all."

Nikolai Zibaroff, seeing much of the result of his struggle for economic security in ashes, broke down and wept like a child. For almost a week he barely spoke to anyone. Could he have been wrong when he urged the young men to work on the railway grades and in lumber camps? Had he been wrong when he had insisted that money must be earned to buy horses, harness, axes, spades, needles, boots?

Understanding dawned on him. He had been in unconscious opposition to God; he had been wilful and reasoning when he should have had faith. Faith in God! Faith in Christ! Faith in Petushka! Now, slava Bohu, Nikolai Zibaroff saw the light which would reveal the true way to the Kingdom of God!

To the great joy of the zealots and the dismay of the anti-zealots, Zibaroff threw himself into the movement for freedom and the promised land in earnest. Before the middle of September, four hundred men, women, and children, led by Zibaroff, marched southward from Thunder Hill Colony. As they approached each village they sang and shouted "let us all go to the promised land." Even the "bad" villages, curious to see and hear these "mad" ones, fed the pilgrims, who carried no provisions. At every village more converts joined the march, in some cases whole villages being abandoned in an afternoon; in others only a few inhabitants joined the surging, singing, preaching throng.

When the pilgrims reached the outskirts of Poterpevshi village, of the South Colony, where Peter Verigin's mother Anastasia and her son Gregori resided, their numbers had grown to 1,700.

Headed by Gregori Verigin, the Poterpevshi villagers went forth to meet them. After exchange of formal greetings and slava Bohus, Gregori asked, "Where are you going?"

"Let us all go to the promised land," said a pilgrim.

Gregori remonstrated that the promised land might be very far away, and how could they hope to get there, especially with so many very young children and very old grandparents? Gregori, according to a letter he wrote to Aylmer Maude, quoted from

Holy Scripture in an effort to show the people that what they were doing "is not good, it is even sinful."

But the pilgrims were resolute. No one other than Peter Verigin could have turned them back now. Gregori, who, Verigin-like, had done little or nothing to enlighten the credulous, now found himself confronted with the ready-made answers that his brother had instructed the faithful to use in reply to questions put by "foreigners."

"Have you an elder among you who, possibly, tells you to behave like this?" Gregori inquired.

"We have no elders, none among us is greater than another," replied a voice from out of the assemblage.

"Each one of us decided for ourselves, in accord with what his conscience tells him is right," said another.

"And we did not come here to see you," said a woman to Gregori who was still smarting under the rebuke.

"No," said a lean-faced pilgrim, "nor do we want food or a place to stay the night, but before we go we wish to see the 'Mother of God.'"

Peter Verigin's mother, wrinkled and approaching eighty, had aged since the days in Caucasia when she was only Anastasia Verigina, close friend and relative of Lukeria Kalmikova. But time is advantageous to belief in a "Mother of God." Old age, like an owl in the sun, may appear wise in its silence.

They said good-bye to her, and moved on, taking a scattering of men and women from Poterpevshi village. South toward Yorkton they marched, carrying their sick and aged on stretchers made from poplar poles and gray blankets. Plowed fields over which they passed were tramped to powder. On stubble fields, yellow before they crossed, they spread out to gather stray heads of wheat . . . "remember that the Apostles, passing through the field, 'plucked the ears of corn and ate.'"

Non-Dukhobor homesteaders came out to gaze in wonder at this strange procession; to fear what these people might do; to jeer; to pity. But the pilgrims appeared not to notice. As they passed through a lane of gaunt poplar trees, the fallen leaves rustled in their steps like a great sighing, and their voices rose in a psalm of melancholy longing. Prairie chickens in the line of march whirled out of reach. At times rabbits led the procession for a few yards, hopping out of sight. There were shouts of, "The Kingdom of God. . . The promised land. . . Slava Bohu!"

In a clump of trees to which a few yellow leaves still clung,

a flock of blackbirds sang with noisy expectancy of "going south."

"We also are free like the birds," said Ivan, "and we are going to the sunny land, but we will stay there, not returning in the spring."

"Slava Bohu," said Semon, "but I wish we too had wings like the birds; my feet are very sore."

A baby was born, and one child died before they reached Yorkton on October 28. At the outskirts of the town they were met by North West Mounted Police who had instructions to herd the entire pilgrimage into Yorkton's Immigration Hall, where puzzled government representatives were to persuade them to return home. Through the streets they went, the red-coated policemen riding alongside them, the town's population of seven hundred or more following on the sidewalks.

Little tots hanging onto their mothers' skirts saw a railway train and red grain elevators for the first time. Some prattled with laughter at these wonders; others, too tired to be interested, cried quietly to themselves.

Wails of fear and dismay and much weeping arose from the women when they were herded into the Immigration Hall and other buildings provided by the government. Outside, a government representative, speaking in Russian, told the men that as soon as they returned to their farms their wives and children would be released to them.

"It is not right that you should keep our sisters and children," protested Zibaroff, the light of hysteria in his eyes.

"Free them! Free them!" shouted Mahortoff, "and we will all go the place where it is possible to live on fruits without having to enslave our brothers, the animals."

But the government would not free the sisters. Policemen tried, and not roughly so, to herd the men out of Yorkton, while about sixty Dukhobors, non-pilgrims who had followed the pilgrimage, argued with their brothers that they should return to their villages. But most of the men would hear nothing; they had set out for the promised land, and they would reach it. Forty miles from Yorkton near Churchbridge, a drizzling rain overtook them. Behind them they had left little piles of blankets, coats, hats and boots. In the ditches they grazed on seed pods of wild rose bushes, leaves, grass, anything of vegetable nature. The sun came out again, drying the clothes on their shivering bodies. At times they left the railway track to glean stray heads of wheat from the stubble.

Some Canadian farmers and townsmen along the line of march, gave them bread and potatoes; others, of various national backgrounds, cursed "these mad 'bohunks,' and the government that let them into this country."

"Why?" "Why?" the spectators asked. "Why are they doing this? Where are they going?"

Speers, and the other government men who followed to keep the pilgrims under surveillance, continued to ask why.

"Why did you not keep your boots?" asked Speers of Nikolai Zibaroff.

"Jesus had no boots," Zibaroff replied.

"But your feet will get cold. Winter will soon be here," insisted the kindly immigration agent.

"Jesus keeps my feet warm," Zibaroff persisted.

The weather was fine, the nights unusually warm for the end of October. Many pilgrims thought God had extended the summer until such time as they would reach the promised land, but a number, exhausted and disillusioned, turned back to their villages. Still more might have done so if a gaunt and hollow-cheeked pilgrim had not been visited by a "revelation." Wild-eyed, and clutching the air, he said he had seen Peter Verigin, who had said, "Have faith. Go on; I will be in the promised land to greet you."

On November 3, after a march of five days in which they had walked eighty miles, the weather changed. Riding on a bitter northeast wind came sleet, then snow. Somehow they huddled together at nights with few blankets or coats and were mostly able to rise in the morning to continue their march. In the next three days they covered seventy miles, reaching Minnedosa, where they were offered a temporary haven in the skating rink. On Sunday afternoon a special train came with North West Mounted Police aboard it. Speers, the immigration agent, addressed the Dukhobors and asked them to return to their homes.

"No," replied one, "the time has not come to return. We are going on to the promised land."

However, when Speers, whom the Dukhobors liked more than they did most "foreigners" and government men, started from the rink, some two hundred pilgrims followed him out. At first it seemed as if they would follow him to the train, but they attempted to go in the opposite direction. Their path was blocked by police and spectators. Speers, taking one pilgrim by the arm, walked him toward the waiting train and shouted over his shoulder that

the others should follow. Farmers, merchants, railway men, a parson, anyone who happened to be among the hundreds of spectators, took a pilgrim by the arm and walked him to the railway station. Some went placidly enough, others had to be pushed and shoved, a few were carried, but none abandoned his code of nonviolence.

Zibaroff, resisting stubbornly, was lifted into a wagon and held there muttering, his eyes rolling like a steer's on the way to a slaughter-house. Those remaining in the rink, about two hundred and fifty, less anxious to continue the hard pilgrimage, went to the train with little persuasion. Once settled in the warm coaches, all resigned themselves to returning home to their villages. Their women and children were there already, waiting for them. What puzzled them most about the "Anglichani" and the "*politsia*" was that "these people believe in governments, yet they do not strike us with whips as in Russia." The "Englishmen" and "policemen" themselves were puzzled by the Dukhobors; "not one of them lifted a hand to strike us when we stopped their march and took them to the train."

It had been an event for Minnedosa, something to talk about besides the price of wheat, railway expansion, politics, cricket, polo and the weather. Amidst the jokes and deprecations, there was evident among the spectators a sympathy "for these Dukhobors with their odd ideas, who seem so keen on their cause, whatever that may be."

The train left at six o'clock that evening. From Yorkton to their villages most of the returning pilgrims walked. A few who suffered from colds, malnutrition, spiritual distress, were taken back in wagons.

In the villages, again in the presence of the "bad" brothers, the "mad" ones tried to appear nonchalant, but many felt sheepish. "It is because you did not join us that we failed," said one.

As winter set in amidst the dissension and uncertainty of the village life, rumors continued to circulate that Peter Verigin was on his way from Siberia.

"Anutka," said Efrem to his wife, "where did those needles come from, those you are darning with? Did you not burn everything of steel before we started for the promised land? . . . And those leather boots?"

"Da," Anutka said, "I nearly burned everything. But a few things I put away in case we might need them."

"Tak," said Efrem.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

KRISTOS LEAVES SIBERIA

THE DUKHOBOR PILGRIMAGE in search of the promised land, contrasted against the less lurid background of everyday life on the prairie, provided opportunity for political partisanship and sensational journalism. English-language Canadian newspapers, more especially those supporting the Conservative party in opposition to the Liberal government at Ottawa, published factually inaccurate reports, supplemented with editorial attacks on the Liberals in general and Clifford Sifton, minister of the interior, in particular. Sifton was the man held mainly responsible for bringing to Canada "these mad Russian peasants" and "fanatics in sheepskin coats." Even the French-language newspapers of Quebec showed interest in the West.

A reporter for the Manitoba *Free Press*, who accompanied the pilgrims along the railway track, wrote an accurate account of their abortive journey. In Sunday editions of United States dailies, the "facts" became convenient skeletons for literary ornaments illustrated with "artist's conceptions." One of the most factual reports, however, appeared in the New York *World*.

Newspapers in England, prior to the strange pilgrimage, had said very little of Dukhobors. Now too, they carried stories about these peculiar people, who, given a haven in Canada, were making a doubtful success of the experiment in practical philanthropy. The Tsar's press was pleased to prove that Dukhobors were hopeless fanatics, that they had always been so, and that it was therefore not surprising that the imperial government had occasionally been forced to adopt disciplinary measures in dealing with the Dukhobors "for their own good."

Bodianski, "God's Truth" purveyor, whose visit to the Dukhobors had helped prepare them for the pilgrimage, Tchertkov, self-appointed cardinal of Tolstoyanism, and various votaries of the "right way of life," had publicized the Dukhobors in Turkey, France, Sweden, Germany, and other countries. Thus the way was prepared for stories of the pilgrimage even more preposterous than was the trek itself. Because of the Dukhobors' traditional

secrecy concerning their ruler, no mention was made of the part played by *Verigin's Letters*.

Vladimir Tchertkov, in England, anxious to maintain his eccentric prestige while continuing his pose as oracle in all things Dukhobor, explained the cause of the pilgrimage to an audience in Essex Hall, November 26. He said, in part :

The Doukhobors felt that the material prosperity that they had met was threatening their spiritual development. . . . They thought to find a milder climate where agricultural operations more suited to their genius would be possible, especially where gardening could be carried on without the need of employing animals. They regarded it as wrong for men to own land as individuals. The Doukhobors feeling that they were not wanted by the Government . . . thought it more proper and courteous to withdraw, before the officials were put to necessity of evicting them . . .

A doubter in the audience asked Tchertkov to explain how the Dukhobors proposed to live without any form of government.

"That," replied Mr. Tchertkov, "is very simple. Under exceptional difficulties, 15,000 Dukhobors so lived in Russia for fifty years, during which time there was not one single crime among them."

"And they had no leader?"

"No, they had no leader. None among them was greater than another," said Tchertkov. He did not mention his *Handbook* which he had so assiduously prepared in the Russian language and sent to the Dukhobors prior to the pilgrimage.

The Quakers of Philadelphia, who had helped the Dukhobors to buy horses, horse collars and boots, were nonplussed by the sudden and strange abandonment of these things. Joseph Elkington, so favorably impressed by the Dukhobors during his visit among them a few weeks before they began their search for the promised land, was in the midst of writing his book extolling their Christian virtues when he heard about their unexpected behavior. What could have come over these kindly, truthful, simple, hospitable Christian people?—for that was the way he had found them. Someone outside of themselves must have misguided them. That was the explanation of it. They, Elkington wrote in his book, "have been deluded by a religious fanatic—not originally of their communion—who has posed as a prophet, and has taught that the use of animals as beasts of burden is unscriptural, and that Jesus would soon come again in person."

It would seem that Elkington blamed Bodianski for the trek. But the truthful Dukhobors failed to divulge to Elkington that Peter Verigin was Jesus Christ in person to the more credulous brothers and sisters.

Tolstoy—the less anxious to use human beings as guinea pigs by which to test the validity of social theories than were his apostles—was far from pleased with the pilgrimage. In a talk with Aylmer Maude he expressed disappointment and apprehension concerning the extremes to which the Sons of God were going.

Maude's objective mind would not allow him to accept the various "reasons" put forth to justify the pilgrimage, with the result that he delved into the mysteries of Dukhobor Government, later writing his conclusions in his conscientious and informative book: "Personally my only regret is to have helped, however unwittingly, to mislead the Canadian government or anyone else. By this book, in which I do public penance, I try to atone for that blunder. How it occurred, I have already explained." (How Maude had been led to believe that the Dukhobors sect was a collective sainthood.)

Herbert Archer, the Englishman, who, with the several other English and Russian admirers of the Dukhobors had come to Canada to live with them, was now the sole remaining member of those would-be mentors. Disillusioned, Archer had become cynical. In a bitter letter to Maude, he saw one motive of the pilgrimage as an attempt to "so inconvenience the Canadian government that it would concede their demands as to the land question and registration. . . . The sect, because it is a sect, is self-centered, self-righteous, and intolerant. . . . Individuals perceive this, but the mass are submerged." *

The Quakers continued their efforts to have Peter Vasilivich Verigin released from Siberian exile. This literate, quiet-mannered and practical man might be of help to his own people, they thought. Officials of the Canadian government, some of whom had an inkling that Peter Verigin was something of a leader, hoped that his arrival in Canada might induce the Dukhobors to grow wheat on the prairie, instead of looking for Christ on it.

At last, late in November of 1902, the British embassy at St. Petersburg was informed that Peter Verigin was on his way from

* Most of Archer's records are not available. His notes and he himself were destroyed when, a few years later, his shack burned to the ground.

Obdorsk, Siberia, to Moscow, and in due course would be allowed to leave the empire of the tsars forever.

News of the long-expected liberation was received with great joy and excitement by the faithful in Canada. So that their leader would have funds, they remitted sums of \$1,000 to each of five towns in Russia through which he might pass.

Tolstoy met Verigin on the same Moscow station platform where eight years before he had been unable to see him on his way to Siberia. Tolstoy, seventy-four, almost toothless now, his gray beard yet more flowing, was unaware of the way in which his philosophy, even his very words and phrases, had reached the Dukhobors in Caucasia. Far be it from Peter to enlighten him, nor could he explain the pilgrimage.

Tolstoy, despite his zeal for principles he accepted as true, had no wish to see human beings in mass "sacrificed on the altar of abstract theory." This he tried to impress on Verigin, giving him moderate counsel, but Peter, listening politely, shrugged his shoulders.

"Leo Nikolaivich," he said, "I do not know about the conditions in Canada. I am only one of the brothers, and I have no authority over the people, each one of whom uses his own conscience to decide what is best. But I, dear Leo Nikolaivich, will give them your message, because I know they love you as a brother in Christ." With such poise did Peter act his part, the piercing eyes of Leo Nikolaivich Tolstoy had no perceptible effect on him.

When Verigin reached England in December, Tchertkov had arranged a large meeting of welcome for him. Tchertkov, as chairman, opened the meeting with a speech extolling the virtues of Dukhobors, stressing the suffering "that this our brother in Christ, Peter Verigin, who for his principles of truth has suffered long in exile, and who will speak to you now in Russian language, even more eloquently than I could hope to in English."

Verigin rose from his chair, his massive figure and easy grace impressing his audience even before he spoke. His height, bearded handsome face, Russian shirt of white silk belted at the waist, high black boots; his voice, soothing, stimulating, like an organ; what does it matter if this eloquent man cannot speak English?

Verigin sat down amidst applause. Tchertkov, bearded and booted also, translated Verigin's speech. He had expressed a deep gratitude for the co-operation of the friends of the Dukhobors in England. It was very kind of the Anglichani to allow the Dukho-

bors a home in their country Canada. Mr. Verigin was very grateful to God to be on his way to join the brothers. Praise God.

Tchertkov then read an address in which he "explained" Dukhobor principles of vegetarianism and the pilgrimage, in much the same way as he had explained it at a previous meeting: "Concerning the statements made by newspaper correspondents about the words of some of the Dukhobors, that is very easy to explain. The Dukhobors' sermons seemed strange to others, because the Dukhobors were speaking in a symbolic language. Not understanding the spirit which motivates these people, the correspondents naturally received the wrong impression."

The meeting passed a resolution to agitate in the press and elsewhere for a more tolerant attitude toward the Dukhobors. Several members of the London Liberal Society were in the audience, and they wished to ask questions of Peter Verigin through an interpreter. Tchertkov granted this request.

"You consider yourself a follower of Christ," began a man addressing Verigin, "and you say it is not right to kill animals for food. But we are told in the New Testament that Christ himself ate fish and drowned 2,000 pigs after driving evil spirits into them. How is that compatible with vegetarianism?"

Verigin's Tartar-shaped eyelids came together, ever so slightly, as Tchertkov relayed the question to him. If he had had no beard, those in the front seats might have seen an ironical smile on his lips.

"According to our understanding and belief," Tchertkov interpreted after Verigin had spoken, "Christ was a man living some 2,000 years ago. We think he only opened a door to truth, leaving us freedom to progress still further."

This reply impressed the liberals with Verigin's courageous intellectualism.

"I was at one time a vegetarian," began a second questioner, "but later I came to understand from the New Testament that refusal to eat meat is unnecessary; now I eat meat and consider it very nice."

"I also think that eating meat is very nice," Verigin replied. "But it is neither nice nor right to kill."

"What is your attitude toward marriage and divorce?"

"According to Dukhobor teachings," Verigin began with an unostentatious but impressive movement of his hands, "marriage is a union of love.

"Where there is no love, then there is no union, in other words,

no marriage. And to keep these people forcibly together is neither possible nor right. For instance, let us consider this meeting. We gathered here for a purpose. When we have finished our work, would it be possible to hold us here longer, merely by such an action as locking the door from the outside? Such an action would be foolish. Yet I wish to say, at the same time, that I do not mean it is right to have a free and unhindered exchange of wives and husbands whenever a whim strikes someone. We do not encourage this, and such among us happens very rarely," he finished unhurriedly.

Many in the audience earnestly sought light on these age-old problems of how to live a life; what to do? Perhaps this handsome muzhik, with his apparent self-control, might point the way. Who could say? Others of the audience were intrigued by a game of intellectual maneuvering; a few wished to show their own superior knowledge; but all were impressed with Peter Verigin.

"How," came another question, "do you explain Christ's words, 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's.' Does that not mean that one should submit to governmental authority?"

"Unfortunately," said Verigin, indifferent to the lie upon his lips, "I have read the New Testament very little. Therefore I might make a mistake in answering your question concerning something in the New Testament. Yet as far as I understand it, the conversation was about money. Christ was asked, in other words, is it necessary to pay a money tax to Caesar? He asked that the coin be shown to him, and, seeing on that coin the stamp or picture of Caesar, decided that it belonged to Caesar, and therefore ordered given back to Caesar, Caesar's. As long as man has money he must return it to the government from which he received it. If he gives back all his money then, of course, he becomes free of taxes. I have just heard that some of the Dukhobors in Canada carried out these words of Christ. They brought their money to the government agent and to that extent became free," said Verigin.

"In your opinion, is service to God compatible with service and submission to government?" a man asked.

"There is absolutely nothing in common between the two. In this case, I happen to remember the words of Christ, 'It is impossible to serve two masters.' And these masters are so very different. God attracts men to his service in full freedom. Govern-

ments demand men serve their selfishness by using force and violence, such as in an army."

"Can society exist without a government?" ventured a voice from the back of the hall.

"I think that in a herd of horned cattle there must be a strong and powerful bull who with yet larger horns will keep the herd together for its own good. But human society, having the powers of reasoning, could live freely without government."

"What do you think about smoking tobacco and drinking alcoholic beverages?" asked someone.

"We consider tobacco as useless and alcoholic beverages as harmful, and that is why we do not use one nor the other."

"Do you consider Christ as the son of God?"

"All creation is the Son of God."

"What is it you wish from the Canadian government?"

"We desire that we should be allowed to live, freely, not harming our neighbors in any way. Every person should have as much land to work as his strength will allow. This land we desire to be held communally, not belonging to any individual, and we wish that no one would force us to act against our conscience." Verigin's voice was resonant with persuasion.

On and on went the questions. Unflinching came his answers; Tchertkov, rising to interpret, sitting while Verigin spoke—highly pleased with it all.

After adjournment, many came to shake the hand of this Christian martyr and he shook their hands, despite it being an "unchristian" custom. "Spasibo, spasibo, thank you, thank you," bowing from the waist, eyes benign. "Spasibo. Slava Bohu."

Tchertkov assured the knot of admirers that Peter was a typical Dukhobor. How could his brothers in Canada be guilty of the things said about them in the papers? The accusations were obviously unfounded, absurd. So the last of the audience departed, determined to do all possible to counteract the lying stories in the newspapers and halt the Canadian government's persecution of these highly intelligent, "nature's gentlemen," the Dukhobors.

Paul Birukov, the Tolstoyan—who, with Tchertkov and Tre-gubov, had failed in the attempt of 1896 to present to Tsar Nikolai II, a petition on behalf of the Dukhobors exiled to Georgian Caucasia—interviewed Verigin in England. Aylmer Maude had told Birukov he, Maude, suspected the Dukhobors had a powerful government in the person of Peter Verigin. This Birukov now set about to verify.

"Do the Dukhobors acknowledge authority over themselves, and are you that authority?" Birukov asked Verigin. "Do you recognize yourself as an authority over the Dukhobors?"

"To recognize man's authority over man is completely against Dukhobor teachings," Verigin answered with an air of being offended at the imputation. "According to our teachings all people are free and equal, no one among us is greater than another. There is no authority over human beings except the power of God.

"Pravda, I tell you," Verigin continued in aggravated tone, "a Dukhobor is none other than a person who refuses to recognize over himself the authority of any human being. The Dukhobor is the common Russian muzhik gathered together from all corners of Russia for the purpose of not recognizing any human authority over himself.

"I consider myself," Verigin went on, "as an equal member of the Dukhobor community, and am always ready to do my duty to aid my brothers, if they should turn to me for advice or counsel. But concerning what some persons say and write about me being their leader, I cannot help that; but it is chepuha! I tell you, nonsense!"

Peter said he was not conversant with the details of what was happening among the brothers and sisters. Yet, he remarked, there must be some good reason for the pilgrimage, for Dukhobors were reasonable people. About the difficulties with the Canadian government concerning the land, registration of births, marriages and deaths, Verigin confided to Birukov that he was completely on the side of the brothers, "because such demands of a government are against the freedom and independence of man."

At the port of St. John, Peter Verigin was met by Ivan Evon, Paul Planedin and Semon Rebin, "under an arrangement completed by the Dominion government." The three had been sent by the Dukhobors to welcome him, and the government had been in close touch with them while they awaited Verigin's arrival. The government, suspecting something of his influence over the people, wished to take advantage of any opportunity to "sober" the immigrants through him.

With the Dukhobor delegates and Harvey of the immigration department, he arrived in Winnipeg on the afternoon of December 22. Several of the faithful, and his sister Anna Vasilivna

Podovnikova, were on the station platform. Anna, seeing her brother standing half a head taller than the average passenger, ran toward him, the other Dukhobors wide-eyed and open-mouthed trotting after her. Peter, put down his suitcase, took off his black fedora, opened his arms, "Anna!"

Amidst many slava Bohus, he kissed the other Dukhobors.

As the party left the station for the Immigration Hall where the brothers and sisters had awaited his arrival, he met Herbert Archer and Crerar, immigration agent of Yorkton, and Mrs. Almanovski, interpreter for the *Manitoba Free Press*. Moffat, acting commissioner of immigration, also welcomed him to the prairies.

"You will be glad, Mr. Verigin," Moffat smiled affably, "to be in a country where there is religious and individual freedom."

"I have not been here very long," Verigin answered through an interpreter, "so I do not know whether it is a free country or not."

Moffat was impressed with Verigin's bearing. Even Verigin's suit of clothes caught his eye—trousers encased in close-fitting dark-gray leggings edged with black cloth; a silken cord around his neck, to which was fastened a large silver watch and a golden pencil; in his coat pocket, a large fountain pen, secured by loops of black cloth.

After realizing that this unusual immigrant was not disposed to promise anything concerning the advice he might give the Dukhobors, Moffat said, "You will know all about the troubles the government has had with the Dukhobors when you get among them, Mr. Verigin. We hope your coming may have a very good effect. We will do anything possible to help you."

"Spasibo, thank you," Verigin bowed.

"You must be tired after your long journey, and you must be hungry. So now I'll say good-bye to you and wish you a safe journey to your mother tomorrow."

Verigin listened very gravely to the translation, and shook hands with Moffat: "I thank you very much," he said. "I hope my coming will be good." He went upstairs to his room.

Peter left that evening for Yorkton. Next morning when he stepped out of the train at Yorkton, a hundred eager followers were on the station platform to greet him. Not pleased with the reception, as he had asked that only close relatives, should be there, he immediately left to travel the forty miles by relays of

sleighs to the village of Poterpevshi. It was cold, and the trail was snow blown, but, with several changes of horses, he reached his old mother's village soon after sundown.

The village street was lined with women, and men bareheaded, despite the cold, from whom rose a psalm of welcome. Not since the days of Lukeria Vasilivna Kalmikova had the old folks sung with such joy in their hearts.

Peter got out of his sleigh and stood before them, cap in hand, head slightly lowered, until the rising and falling cadences ceased to pour from out the reeds of this human organ, and the last notes floated off in the frosty darkness. There was silence except for the audible sob of a woman here and there in the assemblage.

Methodically, as of old, despite the mingling of high hopes and apprehension, which any people would feel if they were meeting their God face to face after long separation, they performed the traditional ceremony of greeting. Peter had not forgotten his lines. His was the same voice, though deeper. To the old folks it was like yesterday again. For those who had grown up in the last fifteen years, it was almost a miracle that Petushka, real Petushka, should be standing there in flesh and blood before them. At the last "Slava Bohu" of the ceremony, the assemblage knelt as one and touched their foreheads to the snow. As one they rose again.

"For a very long time now," Petushka spoke, "the forces of evil have kept us apart. Always I have been with you in the Spirit of Christ, even though our hearts have been sore, and many of you have suffered harsh persecution for your belief in truth. Now God has seen that we should be again together, and slava Bohu, I cannot tell you how glad I am."

"Dear Petushka," sobbed a woman.

"He is here," shouted someone. "*Kristos vos kris!* Christ has risen!"

"Slava Bohu!"

"Will someone show me where my Mother's house is?" asked Peter, "I will go now to gladden her heart and mine."

And so in the lamp-lit doorway, his mother in his arms, they left him. Left him and went away to sleep, though when morning came, many had not closed their eyes.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

NAKEDNESS

THAT DAY, POTERPEVSHI VILLAGE became Otradne village. The villagers changed the name to mark the coming of Peter Vasilivich Verigin. Poterpevshi means "has suffered"; Otradne means "is joyful."

Throughout three days the faithful from many villages came to Otradne to greet their ruler, receive his blessing and ask his advice. He commended the pilgrims for their zeal and assured them they had done very well in their search for the promised land in the Spirit of Christ; but now it would be right for them to stay at home and work, even using horses. He had words of praise for the brothers and sisters who had not joined the pilgrimage, "they who stayed in the villages, having everything ready when the other brothers and sisters came home for the winter."

So pilgrims cut their beards, sheared their long hair, began using milk and butter, wearing leather boots and riding in horse-drawn sleighs again. The non-pilgrims felt pleased that they had stayed home, though among them were those who wished they could have earned Petushka's praise both for remaining at home and going on the pilgrimage. But even Peter Verigin, for all his verbosity, could not work that miracle for them.

Peter agreed to an itinerary by which he would visit every village. Delegates hurried home to spread the glad tidings, arranging relays of horses and sleighs along his route of travel.

On the evening before he was to leave Otradne village, he called a meeting in the large room of his mother's house; his home now. The room was packed, the faithful standing like herrings in a can, so that when the opening psalm was finished there was not space to bow. Peter began his oration with a review of his banishment from Caucasia, the suffering of the brothers and sisters for their Christian way of life. He told them of his journey from Siberia to Moscow, from Moscow to England and thence to Canada. And then to the sedulous and perspiring throng, he spoke of Canadian settlement.

"I came to Canada," he said, "because of God's will. You came to Canada before me, also of God's will. Slava Bohu. I

think that it is not at this time necessary for us to seek further for a land where we will live peacefully in the Spirit of Christ, as brothers and sisters together. Pravda, Canada is a cold country in winter, but the climate here is very healthy. There is no fever here and all necessary vegetables grow very well."

"Slava Bohu," interjected a woman, who a few weeks before, had searched for the promised land.

After reiterating that no true Christian could at the same time be grasping and worldly, Peter went on to speak of the necessity for being practical in farming and village affairs. A certain amount of prosperity was necessary. "Yet, in order to have prosperity it is absolutely necessary to live in brotherly and sisterly love. For such harmony the best way is communal life; communal ownership, communal working of the land. Such is the Christian way to live and the most practical way. Those who wish to live apart as individual farmers must have full freedom to live in their own way.

"Freedom, never force, must be the foundation of everything. Christ said that man must be free. Christ also said that all Christians should strive to enter at the straight gate, 'For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' For us the straight gate is surely communal life."

"A second very important thing, in order that we will have success in our communal life, is the securing and possession of farm animals, especially horses. According to my opinion each family must have at least one pair of horses and one or two cows. Some among us have considered it unjust and not right to use the rewards of labor done by animals, but—"

"In Canada," interrupted a pilgrim, "all farm work is done with horses, and man makes a personal profit out of the enslavement of our brothers the animals. Is that right?" The pilgrim's face became red in the long moment of silence that followed his question.

"To enslave the animals and treat them as slaves is very bad," Verigin went on to the relief of everyone. "A human, that is, a true Christian, must never think or act toward his horse as a master does to a slave. A Dukhobor must treat his horse as a brother working together communally for one another's benefit. The horse works for the man in growing wheat for instance, but the horse also works for itself to grow oats for itself. Also, man works with his hands mowing and gathering hay for the horse and building him a nice comfortable stable so that he will

be warm in winter, instead of shivering in the forest like the poor wild animals. Thus there is a very Christian exchange of services. Let us all think of our horses as members of our communes just like ourselves."

The pilgrim pondered the appealing logic of Petushka's answer.

"What should we do about cattle?" asked someone. "What shall we do about the young bulls? If we breed more cows we will also breed more bulls. If we have more horses we will not need more bulls for oxen."

"Da, would it then be right that we should sell those young bulls we do not need to the unchristian butchers?"

"We need not worry about too many bulls among us," Peter answered. "On the ship I came on from England, there were seven hundred immigrants coming to Canada. They will have farms for themselves, but they are very poor. If when you have too many bulls, you could help them, as others have helped you in your first year, by giving them your extra bulls."

This direct and unexpected answer appealed to almost everyone. It was a generous way out of the difficult problem of selling bulls to butchers. There were kulaks present who would sooner have money for the bulls, even from butchers; there were others who questioned, in their own minds, the idea of giving away their brothers the bulls to nonchristians, but none questioned Peter's decision aloud.

Peter, after many quotations from the New Testament of the Holy Bible and much philosophizing about the right way of life, turned to the land question in earnest. "All our future success depends on the way we settle on the land, and in my opinion the people must take land for themselves without further delay; by that I mean they must be deeply grateful to the Canadian government for its attitude toward themselves."

This unexpected pronouncement surprised pilgrim sons of freedom, whose faces, here and there in the audience, showed their bewilderment and dismay.

"For four years they [the Dukhobors] have behaved like guests of Canada," Peter continued, "and the Canadian government has allowed them to behave so without taking away their land. The government would have been justified in taking this land away, but instead it has been very tolerant. Some of you see some kind of danger in doing what the government's laws demand, but I for one do not see such a danger. Canada I see as a land of freedom. . . . If danger to our principles should arise later, then we

will meet that danger if it comes, just as we always have before; but again I repeat there is no danger now. We must have our land secure so that we may live freely in the Spirit of Christ."

"Da, da, yes, yes, that is right," nodded a stout man with a very red neck. Beside him stood a former pilgrim with a long gray face.

"Another question." Peter said, "is the registration of births, marriages and deaths. I think it is very reasonable that the government wants this information even about us. Suppose a man is killed in Canada, the government wants to know about it and catch the murderer so that he will not harm other humans. That is very different from Caucasia, where sometimes a man is killed by a bandit, and that bandit is allowed to ride away and kill someone else and rob and steal also. At the same time, in Canada, soldiers and policemen do not whip or shoot the people.

"About marriages, we are allowed to have our own marriage ceremonies in Canada as we have always had. All that the government wants to know is the names of who was married and when. As for babies being born, the Canadian government does not wish to put those babies' names on a paper so that when they grow up to be young men they will be taken away to war. Many things I see in Canada are different to Russia. Here in Canada the government has promised us that we will not be taken into the army to fight, when killing is against our religion. The people must obey Canadian laws because these laws, in my opinion, are Christian laws, and they are made for our own good and the good of others.

"I have heard that some of the brothers, even in this last few days, have somehow come to believe that they must not settle themselves in one place, but must only travel around preaching; and that some of those brothers have announced that they intend to start out when spring comes. Of course, they are free to do whatever they consider right, but they must first seriously think before they finally make their plans."

Peter paused.

All this was very hard for the "true sons of freedom" who had interpreted Peter's letters and still desired to hold to their interpretations.

"Dear Petushka," began a timid voice, "did you not say that Christ did no physical work, nor did the Apostles, and in order to be true followers of Christ it is chiefly necessary to go out and

preach the gospel of truth and that one may beg bread for the body?"

"That is very true," replied Verigin in reassuring tones. "At times Christ did no physical work. For forty days on a mountain-top Christ did nothing but fast and ponder: What is right? But at other times he worked like other men, as a carpenter building houses, for instance.

"As for preaching the gospel of truth, that, too, is very necessary, especially if a man has become perfect. Then, I think, he should preach nearly all the time and possibly never stay in one place. But have you attained such a level in your own lives to justify your preaching to others? Before one can preach to others, one must live properly oneself. Are you all as good as that? I don't know how you are personally, each one of you, but I know about myself, and I know I have not reached that level."

"Are we to forsake everything for which we have suffered?" asked a high-pitched and trembling voice. "Will we begin eating meat again, begin using force . . . and was it right that the government used force to stop us on our way to the promised land—" His voice choked with a sob.

"We will not forsake everything," Petushka's voice resounded like a double bass. "We will not kill animals for food, nor will we eat meat, nor fight in an army, nor use force in any way. I am glad that you mentioned these things, my brother in Christ, so that we may all affirm our true principles. I love you for it. I love all the brothers and sisters."

"Petushka loves us; dear Petushka!"

"I repeat that I admire the pilgrims who did what they thought was right, even though the time had not come to find the promised land. True, I do not like the use of force. Who among us does? But in what the government did that time I see the finger of God. The government saved hundreds of true Christians and brothers who are very dear to me and all of us; saved them from harm, saved them from suicide. I repeat, in this I see the finger of God. Slava Bohu. Let us all sing a psalm to gladden the heart of God."

So the meeting ended. Word of Peter's proclamations spread from village to village with great rapidity.

Next morning he began his inaugural tour of all the villages of three colonies. Wrapped in sheep's wool, like a Himalayan prince, he sat, surrounded by twelve of the faithful, in a sleigh pulled by four of the best horses. Behind came three more sleighs

with baggage, a picked choir, and the "chosen." Among the "chosen" was Mahortoff, the old veteran sailor once in the service of the Tsar. His beard as white as snow, he looked like Santa Claus and felt as happy; everyone in the party was elated; the picked choir sang hymns along the road.

Peter advised his followers to use the English (Gregorian) calendar instead of the Russian Julian. On New Year's eve, singing continued until dawn. On entering each village, after exchanging the conventional greetings, the regal party sat down to eat a fine meal of borsh, pancakes with cream, melted butter, honey, and tea with lemon and sugar. Yorkton and Swan River merchants had a wave of business.

Nikolai Zibaroff "wept tears of joy" when Petushka told him he had done well in his search for the promised land, but now he must work hard again to build communal life and to have a true Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood.

In every village Peter praised Canada, its government, its healthy climate, its prairies, rivers, rolling hills and trees.

Alex Mahortoff—not Mahortoff the Crimean veteran, but Mahortoff a leader of the pilgrimage—was one who felt miserably disappointed in Verigin's pronouncements about settling down and obeying the laws of the government. He did not wish to sign for his homestead. He wished to remain a son of God, a true son of freedom. He, with several others, secretly discussed the appalling possibility that the Spirit of Christ had ceased to reside in the soul of Peter Verigin. It was truly terrible, but what else could an intelligent man or woman think when Peter now denied much of what he had once said?

"Do not feel too badly, Alex," said Efrem with a light of hope in his eyes, "possibly the Spirit of Christ has not left Petushka. Possibly Petushka is only testing everyone to see if they are weak enough to forsake the true way of life and fall into the snare of material things and governments! Later, he will rebuke the 'bad brothers,' and we, the true Sons of Freedom, will sit at his right hand!"

"*Mozhet!* Possibly!" said Alex, his face brightening. "We, too, will outwardly agree now, but in our hearts we will continue our belief in freedom. If Petushka means to test everyone, we must let him."

Peter chose Paul Planedin and Nikolai Zibaroff to act with him in a supreme council of three over all communal affairs. All earnings from produce and wage labor must be paid into the

central treasury. Zibaroff, forgetting the pilgrimage, set to work for communal organization with his ardor of old. Soon he was buying horses and harness and, inside of a few months, selling the surplus bulls of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood to Messrs. Gordon, Ironsides and Fares, meat exporters.

Newspapers throughout Canada praised Peter Verigin as a Godsend to the Dukhobors, to the government, to everyone.

The town of Yorkton rejoiced. No more pilgrimages, no more trouble with the Dukhobors. The Yorkton *Enterprise* of February 26, 1903, mentioned him in its social and personal column: "Mr. Peter Verigin arrived in town yesterday with his team of spirited bloods. He is on his way to Winnipeg to make a report to the department of immigration, after making a tour of the Doukhobor villages."

Verigin proclaimed the Dukhobors would become British subjects; they had decided to comply with the laws of Canada. They would individually make entry for their homesteads in accord with the land laws, though they preferred to work the land communally and live in villages. By 1906, in accord with the laws, they would have title to their homesteads and be full-fledged British subjects.

The Liberals rejoiced. How farsighted they had been in bringing the Dukhobors, and later Peter Verigin, to Canada!

Early in April, Peter called a convention of Dukhobors, "in order that all plans for the summer's work should be decided freely, everyone having their say." The meeting agreed that Peter Verigin, Paul Planedin and Nikolai Zibaroff should take care of entering the names for homesteads. "We have nothing to fear from registering our names," said Peter. "As for taking the oath of allegiance to the Canadian government and the King of England, there is still three years to decide about that, and in the meantime we must live."

The delegates and visitors returned to their villages, most of them anxious to begin spring work on the land, many of the younger men going immediately in search of wages at railway construction, on farms, anywhere they could earn money for the communal treasury. Peter drove from village to village with his four fine horses, encouraging the people, planning new buildings, leading the singing men and women on the way to the fields in early mornings.

A total of 2,025 quarter sections of land were registered; 323,000 acres. Only six families did not register their land.

Even true Sons of Freedom seemed resigned to the "material life" as they termed it. They too went out in the fields. But beneath all this activity, zealots like Alex Mahortoff, Efrem Vlasoff, Alex Makasaeff, Peter Zarenchekoff, Vasa Popoff, and other Sons of Freedom, worked for their ideals and principles. They spread the gospel of freedom secretly. Yes, they might suffer in the beginning. Suffering was always necessary for those who would see the light and believe the truth. But in the end they would be rewarded by Petushka, by God. Slava Bohu. They confided to their wives and close relatives that "Petushka is only testing us when he asks us to obey the government. He does not mean that it is right, he is only testing us as Christ was tested in the wilderness."

Vasa Popoff, he of the red-topped sheepskin hat who was an elder on the first boat to Canada, now busied himself with explaining these mysteries to those he felt worthy. Alex Mahortoff, who had helped with the interpretation of Verigin's letters for the pilgrimage, hoped the Spirit of Christ had not left Peter. If it has not, reasoned Alex, and Peter is only testing the people, then he will love me for what I am doing. If the Spirit of Christ has left him, then what I am doing is still right and God will reward me. Slava Bohu.

About the middle of May—when almost all the Dukhobors were preparing gardens, plowing virgin prairie, or working out for wages—the little group of true Sons of Freedom gathered in the village of Efremovka. There were forty-five men, women and children; and "we," as Alex Mahortoff wrote later, "went in the manner of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, to show humanity how man should return to his fatherland and return the ripened fruit of its seeds. . . . We started from the village of Efremovka, all of us naked. After passing through sixteen villages, we came near the village of Nadozhda."

When they tried to enter the village, non-sons of freedom Dukhobors, authorized by Peter Verigin, "whipped us with willow switches until we were covered with blood. Then we were surrounded by about twenty men who would not let us enter the village."

The sons and daughters of freedom had expected the whippings as a further test. "You will be sorry you have whipped us," they said to the "bad" brothers. "The time will come when you will find out we are right." The whippings also served to test the "bad" brothers, who, had they known the "truth," would not

have accepted Peter's order to whip their Sons of Freedom brothers. "Da, Peter was testing everyone."

Alex Mahortoff's account continues: "Night came on, and the weather changed. It was very windy, with rain, and then snow came. Being naked, we all huddled together like cattle, men, women and children, to keep warm. The twenty Dukhobor guards decided to stay the night by us. They put on their heavy sheepskin coats and bourkas. We alone remained uncovered.

"Next morning it was very strange and wonderful to us, that in spite of the wind and snow none of us were frostbitten. Later, our guards publicly said with amazement, 'We cannot understand why they did not freeze. It was very cold that night, yet not one of them was frozen!'"

Alex Mahortoff tried to explain to the "bad" brothers, the guards, that what he and the other sons and daughters of freedom were doing was for the best for everyone in the end.

"We love you," said Alex, "even though you do not understand, do not see the light, and, instead, treat us like cattle and mad people."

"We do not want your love," replied one of the guards. "Why do you not go home to your villages and behave as good people should? You are hurting Petushka by your antics. He does not approve of you, and he has sent us here to tell you."

"That is what *you* think," said Feodor Razanoff, "but the time will come when you will know differently."

The guards took the women and children with them into the village, shouting at the men that they could go wherever they liked. Petushka had said that the women and children must not suffer.

The twenty-eight men walked southward. Rain came again. So wet and cold and hungry were they that they stayed two days in the village of Truzdenia. The Truzdenia villagers fed but taunted them, and tried to persuade them to turn back.

But the pilgrims shook their heads. They set out in the direction of Yorkton, singing melancholy psalms and grazing on grass and leaves along the way. It was very hard because at this time of the year there were no rose seed pods, nor stray heads of wheat. Some had not been on the first pilgrimage, but one of those who had, sadly remarked, "Last fall when we were here, the blackbirds were going south. Now they are back again, and still we have not reached the promised land. What fools human beings are, all because they have not lived closely to nature like the animals."

Word reached Yorkton "a new pilgrimage is on its way to town." North West Mounted Police on horseback were sent to the outskirts to watch for it. At noon, Thursday, May 21, the pilgrims were straggling within two miles of Yorkton, when "Mounties" asked them where they were going.

"We go to live the Christian life," said Ivan, who had been a wealthy Dukhobor in Caucasia but now had abandoned the "material life."

The policemen warned the pilgrims to return to their villages, and, after counting them, rode back toward Yorkton.

"They do not behave like Cossacks," said Efrem Vlasoff, from the North Saskatchewan River Colony, and who was having his first experience in a pilgrimage.

"No," said Kuzma Novakshonoff, "but possibly they will later. I feel there will be much trouble."

"Let us all now undress to show our belief in freedom," said Alex Mahortoff unbuttoning his trousers.

"Da, then we will all walk into town."

"Smotret! Look!" said Kuzma after they had walked naked for almost a mile, "there are many people coming toward us."

Led by Mounted Police a hundred townsmen and farmers approached in buggies, democrats, wagons, on horseback.

"It is very strange," said Alex, "that these people become so excited when a human takes off his clothes. It is terrible how far man has strayed from nature. If one were to dress an animal in clothes, it would cry out in fright and run not knowing where."

"Look how they are snarling and jeering at us," said Kuzma, when the police and townsmen had surrounded the pilgrims.

"Why do you take off your clothes?" shouted an interpreter in Russian.

"Adam had no clothes before he sinned. We have not sinned, and we wish to do no one any harm," a pilgrim answered.

"Where are you going?" the interpreter asked.

"Into the world," said Alex.

"Will you put your clothes on and return home to your villages?"

"No, that we cannot do. We must go on to wherever God will lead us."

"You will be locked up in a jail. Do you want that?"

"It is not for us to decide. We do not want to be in a jail. But if you use force against us, we cannot help that because we will not use force against anyone. We only wish to be free."

"Da, we are Sons of Freedom and have given freedom to all creation."

Police, assisted by townsmen and farmers, began to dress the pilgrims, who held their arms stiffly, twisted their bodies and behaved as stubbornly as they might without striking their "tormentors."

Partly dressed, they were herded into Yorkton, down the street lined with spectators, into the Immigration Hall. The next day they were tried, on a charge of indecent exposure, convicted and sentenced to three months in Regina Jail. They were detained, however, in the Immigration Hall at Yorkton until July, where attempts to persuade them out of their "belief in freedom" proved futile.

In the North Saskatchewan River Colony, two hundred and fifty miles northwest of Yorkton, the authorities dealt differently with about thirty stubborn pilgrims. Toward evening, a North West Mounted Policeman, of practical turn of mind, invited the naked men and women into a house to spend the night.

"Here are your clothes in case you wish to dress later," said the policeman.

"We will not dress," the pilgrims replied.

The Mountie nailed the house door open, hanging a lantern in the doorway. The night was hot and moist; mosquitoes, attracted by the light, winged their way into the house in a hungry swarm. At first the naked men and women swatted; but soon, tired and itching, they dressed themselves. Next morning they returned to their villages.

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CHAPTER TWENTY

SONS OF FREEDOM

WHATEVER ELSE PETER VASILIVICH VERIGIN may have thought about the Sons of Freedom, he denounced their behavior to government officials and newspapermen, though, of course, he did not refer to his Adam and Eve, back-to-nature and freedom philosophizing set forth in *Verigin's Letters*. For his endeavors to sober the fanatics and for his practical pronouncements to enlighten the Dukhobors generally, he received praise from the Canadian government, Leo Tolstoy, Aylmer Maude, the Quakers in England and the United States, and others less involved in Dukhobor affairs.

The "true" Sons of Freedom, with traditional Dukhobor secrecy, disclosed nothing concerning the mysteries of the "Letters," nor of Peter Verigin "testing us." Those who continued their "belief in freedom," engaged immigration officials, jurists, police and prison guards in involved philosophizing.

The twenty-eight men, sentenced to three months imprisonment for indecent exposure, were held in Yorkton Immigration Hall until July 9, on which day they left by train, under escort of Royal North West Mounted Police. In Regina Jail they stubbornly refused to conform with prison routine, and were, on occasions dealt with cruelly.

Alex Mikhaelovich Mahortoff wrote a lengthy account of their persecution in prison, at the end of which he described their release: "By this time our wives and children were feeling badly about us and had asked Peter Verigin if we could come out of prison. He sympathized with them . . ."

The "warden" had also said they could leave if they would obey the Canadian laws and work.

"What kind of work?" we asked him.

"Every kind," he answered.

"Seeing that we gave freedom to everything, we cannot work with animals," said we.

"So for a while we had to weed grass. Then they let us out.

"On arriving home, most began to work. Of the original number, only ten real true ones were left."

Alex Mahartoff with the other nine "true" ones "waited a little . . . and began again to be active in God's Work. We pulled a packer over the standing grain, flattening it to the earth. And why? That men would learn not to believe in human science, but instead have faith in God . . . we also burnt a binder. Why? That our brothers should not enslave our brothers the animals, but should have faith in God. And we wanted to set fire to a threshing machine, but we were stopped. . . ."

The "bad brothers" stopped them, the "bad brothers" who had bought, at Peter Verigin's advice, their first threshing machine equipped with a new invention, a wind stacker.

Threshing machines of any kind were evil enough to the "true ones," but when they saw wheat straw being whirled through the air into a mounting stack, it was more than they could bear.

"It is terrible," said Kuzma, "they now have a devil inside it to build the strawstack."

Each night when the devil in the separator ceased to breathe straw, and the steam tractor stopped snorting smoke like a gun, some of the "bad brothers" remained to guard the machinery, and the "true sons" were not able to burn it.

The brothers were unable to appreciate having their implements burned and their crops destroyed. They had managed to extinguish the fire in their binder before little more than the canvas was eaten by flames. Then they had used force to put the six Sons of Freedom into an improvised Dukhobor jail; the prisoners were Vasa Popoff, Kuzma Novakshonoff, Alex Makasaeff, Vasili Makasaeff, Peter Zarchenkoff, Efrem Vlasoff.

When Alex Mahortoff had been in the government jail, he had found the policemen and the guards very harsh. And now Vasa Popoff made the sad discovery that his own brothers were as bad as the government guards. Vasa Popoff, who had once worked so energetically for communal life, had become a "true" Son of Freedom. With bitter disappointment that all the brothers could not understand his new "belief in freedom for all creation" he wrote of his experiences:

"The burning (of the binder) took place in the village of Truzhdenia, late in the evening. When we set fire to the machine, an alarm was sounded, people came running with pitchforks, clubs and fence posts. We hid, because in such angry excitement they could have punctured us with their forks.

"The first day we stayed in the small forest, and on the second night we went into a barn . . . about one mile from Truzhdenia.

When the sun was rising we were found there (by Community Dukhobors) and we were tied two men together . . . driven into Truzhdenia, and on the way we were beaten with clubs. They spit in our eyes, cut our hair with knives and scissors. . . .

"And they discussed us and condemned us over and over, and drove us through their villages, and locked us in prisons and shackled our arms and legs with iron.

"I, Vasili Popoff, and Vasili Makasaeff, in Voskresnia village, together, on the fourth day did break out of our prison, and with irons on our legs and arms we ran away to the Thunder Hill and broke our iron shackles there on the rocks.

"We ate rose seed pods and what vegetables we could find. . . . For twelve days we were only two, but on the thirteenth day came to us Kuzma Novakshonoff, who had escaped . . ."

The next day they were discovered by Ivan Evon, Ivan Kutniakoff and Feodor Obedkoff, "and were still more securely shackled by our own brothers.

"We were driven through the villages in the way that criminals are moved, with a guard of ten of our Dukhobor brothers . . . arms chained one to another . . . Alex Makasaeff was locked in a cellar . . . Efrem Vlasoff was set free because he wished to leave us Sons of Freedom . . ."

Though Vasili's epistle went on to say that "the Dukhobors had told the government about us already" and "the police were waiting for us in Truzhdenia village," police records show that a mounted policeman was sent to investigate a charge of arson (burning a binder) as a result of Peter Verigin having reported the incident to the Royal North West Mounted Police.

Police and prison officials were nonplussed as to how to deal with these "true" Sons of Freedom. Officials had been criticized for their part in the Regina Jail episode. Colonel Perry, commissioner of Royal North West Mounted Police, Regina, later disclosed that he would have preferred that the Dukhobors try to settle their own affairs out of court, and that had Peter Verigin not asked for police intervention, a criminal charge would not have been laid for setting fire to the binder.

A Mountie, sent to investigate, explained to Peter Verigin that the penalty for arson might be three years in a penitentiary, and advised him to try and restore order among the people. He suggested that the case need not necessarily go to court, but Verigin insisted that, as the men were guilty of an offense against Canadian law, they should be punished in a Canadian prison.

Not only did he insist that they be arrested, but he wanted them taken to Regina "in chains" to set an example to others who might wish to become Sons of Freedom. The policeman took them away, but not in chains.

Vasili Popoff wrote: "On the 27th day of September we were taken to Yorkton for further tortures. At Yorkton we were again asked why we set fire to the machine. We explained fully and carefully. We said that the end of all evil had arrived, and so it was now necessary to free all God's creation. In burning all life-destroying weapons [burning of guns and swords in Caucasia], we had taken the first step; and now we were destroying all machines of corruption, because all machinery is evil and useful only for corrupting life on earth . . ."

But the "officials and soldiers" did not understand this explanation.

When they were taken to Regina for trial, Verigin appeared to press for prosecution. Demanding the full penalty allowed by the law, he said he could not be responsible for the actions of crazy persons. The judge sentenced them to three years.

Alex Mahortoff, who was not arrested, sat in his house for a whole week, with the windows boarded "just like a jail." He felt very sad because the brothers would not let him visit from one village to another, and even when he wanted to work, they would not let him.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

MAIDS AND CATECHISM

OF THE YOUNG GIRLS whom Peter Vasilivich Verigin invited to care for his household, presided over by his aged mother, several were relatives; Anastasia Holubeova being a daughter of one of his nieces. "God send her plumpness, and beauty will come of itself," had long been a Dukhobor proverb. Anastasia Holubeova, sixteen, was proverbially beautiful. Limbs well covered, breasts rounded and full, blue-eyed, fair-haired; lips smiling through physical health, and brow unfurrowed by intellectualism, she was taller than the maid, Fedosia, and wider-hipped than the maid, Anutka.

Lesser maids also sang to him, pulled his high boots from his feet when he came in of an evening, kept his white Russian shirts and his English morning coats spotless. But Anastasia drove out with him in the upholstered buggy. When she toured the colonies with him, naïvely basking in her queenship, there was covert gossiping, but the faithful accepted this new arrangement of Petushka's household as the Will of God.

To his flock generally he made no explanation, to several elders and wavering inquirers he explained that it was necessary to fool the Canadian government.

"The government," he said, "has set spies to watch me, as you know. It is better that those spies will say that I am harmless to the government, always being with young girls and that is all." To "foreigners," he introduced Anastasia simply as his niece.

While in exile he had found satisfaction in philosophizing, reading books, writing letters, baiting priests, feeding hungry children, growing cucumbers in hotbeds, long walks, carpentering. There, unworried by the press of day-to-day problems now concomitant with ruling his flock at close range, he had been able to lead a semimonastic existence somewhat in accord with his theories of how to live a life. From that distance it had been comparatively simple to send his "advice" to the faithful, advice for the most part concerning what they should not do.

In Canada, in the midst of his people, he was confronted on all sides with "what to do?" about the smallest details of com-

munal management. Beset by "true" Sons of Freedom on one hand—who wished to give freedom to their brothers the horses—and on the other hand by Independents who wanted to own more horses for themselves, he saw that growth of either faction threatened his Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. What to do? He did what many another man has done when agitated within himself and harassed by the world about him. He found solace in a personable young woman, who had neither desire nor ability to question the wisdom of his schemes.

At the same time he urged the people to produce more so that the communes could purchase more horses, milk cows, and farm machinery; he ordered the young men to go to the railway and lumber camps, every cent earned by them to be turned into the community fund. Most of the land held by the Dukhobors, under agreement with the Canadian government, had not been plowed; yet he purchased from a land company another fifty-two quarter sections for which he paid \$10,000 in cash, and he bought three partly cultivated homesteads for \$360 in cash. He was buying land outright against the time when his people would have to take the oath of allegiance to the British Crown in accord with Canadian land laws, or forfeit their original homestead land.

In 1903, when the steel of the Canadian Northern Railway was laid through the South Colony, the new "town" of Verigin became the commercial center for both South and Thunder Hill colonies. Verigin Station, with its general store, and grain elevator under construction, was only six miles from Otradne village where Peter lived with his mother and his maids, and Otradne remained the social seat of Dukhobor government. When Peter had been approached by the Canadian Northern for railway right of way through Dukhobor lands and a townsite which the company would be pleased to name "Verigin" in his honor, he had been shrewd enough to sell forty acres, on condition that the station be located not in the center of the townsite, but a few yards from the edge of it, so that expansion would take place on Dukhobor property besides that purchased by the railway company.

All the villages of Thunder Hill and the South Colony joined Peter's bolshoi commune, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, wherein all land, livestock, farm implements and money from wage labor were held in common. Work in the fields was done collectively, too, Peter himself going from village to village leading the singing, as men, women and children marched

to the field. Some of the villagers were not enthusiastic about this communal ownership and they predicted it would not last. To these, Peter explained it as only an experiment for one year, and if, after that time anyone wished to leave the commune, he would be free to do so, and take with him all the animals and machinery he had put into it.

The North Saskatchewan River Colony was the thorn in Peter's Christian communism. The colony generally favored holding the land in common, but that was all. By promises of prosperity on earth and spiritual reward in heaven, Peter tried to bring this colony closer within his fold. But, although nearly all recognized him as their leader, a few regarding him as Christ, they did not want another experiment in "owning and working everything in common." They would pay him tribute, they desired his advice and protection, they loved him, they wished to continue living together in villages, but most of them wanted to own their own horses, plows and spinning wheels, just as they owned their own boots and petticoats.

This conditional allegiance to Peter's Dukhoboria was bad enough, but the heretical attitude of Gregori Makaroff, who not only insisted on owning his own land, but who would acknowledge no allegiance to Petushka, was worse. Gregori's way shocked the other villagers, and was frowned upon even by his wife, who tried to persuade him to behave as the other brothers. Nikolai Svetlichnoff talked through a whole night with Gregori, and after exhausting all arguments without avail, Nikolai resorted to horrible predictions of punishments.

But Gregori was resolute. "I do not believe," he said, "that Peter Verigin is a Christ or a god of any kind. I believe none among us is greater than another, and each must use his own reason and conscience to decide things for himself. In all of us there is some of the Spirit of God, but Peter Verigin is only a man."

"But what if the son of a bitch is a god?" Nikolai exploded. "What will happen to you then? Is it not better to be a little bit safe until you know for sure?"

"I am sure enough he is not a god, but I see you are not so sure he is one," Gregori replied.

With the glow of dawn in the sky and the dew of the night on his boots, Nikolai went home with a gnawing doubt of Petushka's divinity.

Then Peter Verigin came to the village; Peter, with six fine horses hitched in pairs, with Anastasia, with his maids and singers. He spoke of communal life as the Christian way, commended Gregori for being a good farmer and horseman. He invited him to the next village, and when Gregori accepted, everyone thought he had been won over.

Some three miles down the prairie trail, Peter ordered his driver to halt; then he began pressing Gregori to join with the brothers in the Christian life, trying flattery at first, then intimidation.

"Your sons, when they grow up, possibly even you yourself, may be taken away by the Canadian government to fight in an army," Peter warned. "If that happens, you must never blame me. I am doing all I can for you."

But Gregori would not give in; instead he walked home, depressed and disturbed within himself.

From then on, Gregori Makaroff was ostracized by the faithful. "No-Dukhobor," they called him. Supplementing moral coercion with economic pressure, they excluded him from communal river crossings. When he wished to cross the river with his horses and wagon to bring sugar and tea from Rosthern town, he, aided by his wife and children alone, had to take the wagon apart and ferry it across wheel by wheel, axle by axle, and then swim the horses across the broad North Saskatchewan. If he would not work the land communally, if he would not admit Petushka as his leader, then "he must at the same time be independent in all things, expecting no help from us," they said.

They would not allow him to keep his "devil" cows in the fenced pasture with their "holy" ones. But Gregori's cows, unaware of their iniquity, wanted the bull in June as did the holy ones. Thus Gregori's young son, Peter, had to watch herd over the heifers, doing duty for a barb-wire fence which his father could not afford.

Peter Gregorovich was eight years of age, blue-eyed, forehead wrinkled by all this controversy he could not well understand. When he was not tending cows or helping his mother in the garden, he went to the little schoolhouse where John Sherbinin, of the St. Petersburg middle-class gentry, taught a straggling class the three R's, besides suitable passages from the New Testament. During the noon hour and recesses, the other ten Dukhobor boys, who intermittently attended school, avoided him at play,

and, echoing the taunts of their parents, reviled him with being "No-Dukhobor"—"Your father, *nyeto-kristianski*."

Later Peter was sent across the river to the Quaker-sponsored school in Rosthern, town of the Mennonite district, twenty-six miles from home. With him went eight other Dukhobor boys, but so impressive were Verigin's warnings against schools, their parents became frightened, and the others returned home.

That autumn, Quakers of Philadelphia conceived a plan to take Dukhobor children to Pennsylvania and New York states, there to be educated while supporting themselves on selected farms. After much discussion and many forebodings, three married couples and six children accepted the Quakers' offer. Among them was Peter Makaroff, who went without his parents. He was assigned to the farm of a hard-working, God-fearing Irishman by the name of McCandless, near Media, Pennsylvania.

This persistence of the Quakers so annoyed Verigin, that from then on he subtly undermined their little influence. But, too cautious to denounce the "Friends" openly he contented himself with pronouncements professing sorrow for their ignorance and mistaken ideals. True, the Society of Friends in England and United States had contributed a few thousand dollars toward the Dukhobor exodus, but "that was the will of God and we thank them for what they have done. But now when they are trying to change our belief in Christ, we must remember the Devil has many ways of going about his evil work."

Early in the winter, two Dukhobor families returned from the Quaker farms. Young Peter Makaroff, however, at the insistence of his father, was among those who remained.

Early in 1904, Peter Verigin concentrated his attention on the South and Thunder Hill colonies where the "truest" Dukhobors lived. He commanded the villages of both colonies to send delegates to a meeting to be held in the South Colony village of Nazhdenia, on February 28.

To the convention, uninvited, came two non-Dukhobors who understood Russian. "They," it was whispered among the delegates, "are spies of the Canadian government." Thus, when the delegates discussed the difficult question of whether or not the true believers should take the oath of allegiance to the British Crown, Verigin made certain that all became aware that none should take the oath. Yet, for the benefit of the "spies," it was agreed exoterically and apparently democratically, "we should

have meetings in all the villages so that each man will decide for himself if he will take the oath of allegiance to the English King."

According to the minutes of the meeting, the following resolutions were approved:

To pay all land taxes due, "and in future build our own roads." To arrange this, two men were to be sent to Regina to ask Government officials to exempt the Dukhobors from the road tax and "allow us to build our own roads."

To send \$500 to Dukhobors in exile in Yakutsk, Russia, "to help the brothers come to Canada."

To purchase more seed drills; two sawmills with planing and finishing attachments, one for the South Colony, another for Thunder Hill.

To buy a brickmaking machine. Each village should begin making roofing tile and build an oil press.

To have buildings for finishing homespun built on to every flour mill, and to build extra stables for the horses of those who bring their grain to the mills.

To buy one hundred more milk cows, one hundred angora goats, and 2,000 pounds of wool for making homespun cloth.

To buy sugar and tea as before (decided after some argument against such extravagance).

To build a large warehouse by the edge of the new railway town of Verigin, and to begin hauling lumber for it before spring.

To thank the Quakers "for wishing to build a school for us, but to tell them it is not necessary, because we will build our own schools." (Joseph S. Elkington's book *The Doukhobors* was published in Philadelphia in 1903; he had offered the royalties from it to build a Quaker school.)

To appoint two representatives (to the central Dukhobor government) from every village, similar to the method of last year, provided that the representatives be careful not to act too much on their own initiative.

Nikolai Zibaroff and Vasili Potopoff to be the buyers of all groceries and clothing manufactured outside of the community.

Paul Planedin and Feodor Sukochoff to superintend the horses and all pertaining to them.

Andrei Semenoff and Ivan Verigin to manage the sheep.

Semon Rebin to supervise the correspondence and continue as official interpreter of the English language to Peter Verigin.

The financial report, covering the current year, showed purchase of farm machinery as follows:

6 steam threshing engines and separators	\$15,290.00
50 binders at \$125 each	6,250.00
59 sulky plows, single furrow at \$24,	1,416.00
50 gang plows, at \$34,	1,700.00
32 hay mowers, at \$46,	1,472.00
20 steel drills, at \$70 and \$90,	1,560.00
Total	<u>\$27,688.00</u>

More than \$111,000, earned by Dukhobors, was turned in to the communal treasury, along with \$8,000 earned by communal contracts and more than \$10,000 obtained from the sale of seneca root. The accounts showed \$6,000 from the sale of beef cattle.

Repayment of loans and donations included the following: \$300 sent to Leo Tolstoy in aid of the Pavlovsti, members of a small non-Dukhobor sect who had been condemned to penal servitude in Russia, because of their religious beliefs; \$500 sent to Tchertkov for his help and expenditure on behalf of the Dukhobors during the migration to Canada.

Peter Verigin supported the Dukhobor tradition of monetary honesty. For instance, Aylmer Maude received a letter, evidently typed by Verigin's secretary, in which a cheque was enclosed for \$1,250 which Maude had loaned to five different villages in 1899. "A repayment," Maude commented, "that could easily have been shirked—after all the confusion of pilgrimage—had the Dukhobors wished not to act honestly."

Verigin had not invited delegates from the North Saskatchewan River Colony to attend his economic conference. About three hundred miles separated it from the South and Thunder Hill colonies; besides, this colony was not inclined toward communal ownership of livestock, farm implements and money. Peter wished to make the colony ashamed of itself by giving his attention to the faithful of the other colonies.

But all was not well in Thunder Hill. Ivan Kanigan had openly expressed his dissatisfaction with the communism of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, and had agreed, after Verigin had persuaded him, to try it for one year. Now he said he did not like it, and that he wished to resume ownership of his horses, cows and implements. But, the Christians gave him only one horse and one cow and stopped him from getting supplies from the communal store. They called him "No-Dukhobor" and "Galacian," told him that his children would be taken away as soldiers

and that he would soon have no land among the Dukhobors. Yet Ivan persisted in his independence.

There were others who wished to live outside the communes, and in the South Colony there was a quarrel between "No-Dukhobors" and "true Dukhobors" in which pitchforks and fence posts were used, but no one was seriously wounded.

Peter, harassed by the Independents on one side and the Sons of Freedom on the other, became yet more opposed to schools among his people, and he feared that, should the faithful take the oath of allegiance to the British Crown, such would tend further to disintegrate his Dukhoboria. So that the faithful should have ready though vague answers to an impending Canadian government inquiry, he had a question and answer catechism printed in Russian language and sent around to the villages to be memorized by all true Dukhobors. These answers were later recited to government officials when they pressed that the Dukhobors adhere to their agreement to naturalization and land laws.

The Catechism

1. Q. Why was Christ born?
A. To save the world, and for kindness and humility.
2. Q. Why do you not wish to become subjects?
A. The teaching of our Savior forbids it.
3. Q. Of what kingdom are you subjects?
A. Of that which has no bounds.
4. Q. To what laws are you subject?
A. To that which has no bounds.
5. Q. Of what faith are you?
A. Judge by our deeds.
6. Q. To what society do you belong?
A. To the Universal Brotherhood.
7. Q. In what land do you live?
A. In the world, temporarily.
8. Q. Wherein has the love of God revealed itself to us?
A. In that God has sent into the world a son of like substance, that through Him we might be saved. Kings! You exist for men who like yourselves are men of war. Peoples! As Christians we cannot take part in any conflicts and dissensions, and therefore you may leave us in peace. We assure you that a time will come when men will beat all their swords into plowshares. So allow us already today to bear the standard of truth along the path towards the golden age. Men are, in truth, all equals; this should be

taught to the children of peasants and kings also . . . wars but increase the misery of mankind.

When a translation of this catechism was published in the Winnipeg Tribune of May 7, 1904, Peter Verigin denied its authorship. When the faithful were asked how they arrived at the answers, they said, "Each of us decided these things for ourselves, we are all equal. We have no one among us who decides for us."

Peter, in a lengthy letter to Tchertkov, published in *Tchertkov's Svobodnoe Slovo* (Free Word) of April 15, piously disclaimed responsibility for Dukhobors "who wish not to sign an attestation of allegiance to the English King . . . there is yet two years to go, and time will show what then will happen. To speak openly, many of the Dukhobors are not satisfied with the Canadian climate and cattle breeding. And taking all things together, whether it will not compel the Dukhobors to emigrate from Canada, cannot be guaranteed."

He was evidently preparing himself and his followers for a struggle with the Canadian government in 1906. Another pronouncement, so flagrantly in opposition to the truth that he dared not commit it to writing, was circulated among his followers by word of mouth. The Canadian government, he whispered to avid ears, had guaranteed the Dukhobors complete exemption from all Canadian laws for ninety-nine years. After that period of trial (the Canadian government to be on trial), the Dukhobors would leave Canada if they did not wish to obey the laws. Thus the faithful were led to believe that if they refused to take the oath of allegiance to the English King when the time came in 1906, it would not be they who would be breaking an agreement, but the Canadian government.

Anxious as was Peter that his subjects should not take oath, nor become "Independents," he was as determined that the Sons of Freedom cult should not spread. He refused to have the Sons of Freedom, serving sentence in Stony Mountain Penitentiary, back in his midst. Had he been willing, the minister of justice would have liberated them, for they had gone on a prolonged hunger strike and one had died. Tales of the Christian martyrs being cruelly tortured in prison were again appearing in publications of various languages, to the embarrassment of the Canadian government.

The Russian foreign minister protested to the British ambas-

sador at St. Petersburg that Dukhobors in Canada had been "tortured in prison." The British ambassador conveyed the complaint to the foreign secretary in London. The foreign secretary dispatched it to the colonial secretary, who relayed it to the governor-general of Canada, who sent it to the prime minister of Canada, who sent copies of the correspondence to the minister of justice and the commissioner of Royal North West Mounted Police.

James Mavor, professor of political economy, traveling through the Northwest Territories to compile a report for His Majesty's Board of Trade, was delegated by the Canadian government to interview Verigin about taking the hunger-striking Sons of Freedom back into his fold.

Mavor, whom Peter Verigin had impressed most favorably when he visited him in Toronto in 1903, had hope of persuading Peter. When he arrived in Swan River, Nikolai Zibaroff met him with a fine team of horses. Paul Planedin, with a still finer team, drove him over the last lap of the trail to the new town of Verigin, where he was received by Peter with the courtesy due an ambassador of a foreign power.

Vasili Obedkoff, Peter's own man Friday of exile, was appointed valet to Mavor. When he washed, Obedkoff stood by in semioriental manner, pouring water over the hands of the honored guest. Mavor was more than ever impressed with Peter's personality, hospitality, his "shrewd and able mind," and his awareness of the "faults and weaknesses of his people."

After a pleasant visit of several days, Peter broached the subject of the Sons of Freedom in penitentiary, as Mavor had hoped he would.

"I would speak with you about something which is very sad to me . . ." Peter began.

Mavor agreed that it was very sad. "If you will give me a letter to the minister of justice," he said, "I will do what I can to induce him to liberate the men, and then perhaps their lives will be saved."

Verigin did not reply immediately. As if in profound thought, he rose from his chair and walked back and forth in the room, while Mavor sat waiting.

"No," said Peter, "that I cannot do. If these men are let out of prison, they will come back here, and they will infect others with their madness, and how then are the people to be managed?"

Mavor, unable to persuade Peter to change his decision, im-

pressed upon him that the complaints of "torture" must cease. Such allegations were unfair to the Canadian government.

That summer, about forty Sons of Freedom, men, women and children, led by Alex Mahortoff, began another pilgrimage through Thunder Hill Colony. Alex, by now, felt sure that the Spirit of Christ had left Peter, and the one hope for the true Sons of Freedom was to leave Canada and find the promised land. Reaching Swan River, the pilgrims marched through the town unmolested, except for looks of disapproval from the spectators arrayed along the main street. To the railway tracks they went, marching southward to the land of fruit and sunshine. Three stations down the line, overtaken by a drizzling rain, they crowded into the depot for shelter. The station agent, on advice telegraphed from the commissioner of immigration, mustered the section men and loaded the protesting pilgrims into a boxcar. Like cattle they were shipped back to Swan River, and after being held there in an old barn for almost a month, they agreed, with the exception of Alex Mahortoff who was taken to Winnipeg for investigation, to return to their villages.

"It was very hard for the Sons of Freedom who went back to the villages," Mahortoff wrote in his epistle. "The other Dukhobors looked down on them so much and were very nasty to them. These pilgrimages were not easy for us to bear, and yet what could we do? We believed in them."

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CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

LAND REVERSION

"MOTHER OF GOD," mother of Peter Vasilivich Verigin, died in 1905. The wailing of the womenfolk, the melancholy funeral psalms, the finality with which her body was lowered in in the grave; these impressed Peter more than did the six-weeks-after-graveside ceremony when the old lady's soul was supposed to enter Heaven on the uncertain wings of faith. He became so lonely, that Anastasia Holubeova, in all her youthful plumpness, could not fill the void within him. The old mood of "Juroshka, the gloomy one," returned; his thoughts turned to Lukeria who had brightened his days in the Wet Mountains of Horelovka.

For the first time since leaving Siberian exile, he began seriously to think of his divorced wife, Dunia, and their son, Peter Petrovich Verigin, whom he had never seen. Dunia, who still lived in the village where he himself was born. And now there were grandchildren; possibly all might unite in Canada and live happily? His son, his own flesh and blood, might prove to be a strong and obedient man capable of bringing both Independents and Sons of Freedom back within the communal fold.

Thus wishfully did Peter Vasilivich dream, and soon he wrote Dunia, half apologizing for bygones which, had been the Will of God, but now should be forgotten by her; even as he, in the Spirit of Christ, had forgiven those who had sinned against him. Slava Bohu.

The letter aroused Dunia's curiosity to such a point she was willing to venture to Canada; but her relatives opposed it.

"He was good for nothing except slyness before, Dunetchka, and now he believes he is Kristus," said one Katelnikoff.

"Tak," said Dunia, "but I have never been in a boat on the ocean. He will send the money. I could come back."

It was the son who decided the issue. Twenty-four years of age, with the restlessness of his mother, he was almost as handsome as his father. To the qualities of his male parent he had added a fondness for vodka and cards.

"Nichevo, do not worry about us," he argued, "I will take care of my mother. I will see with my own eyes what that father

is doing in Canada. Possibly, I will change everything over there. Possibly we will all go to Canada. But first I will see that everything is all right there."

Curiosity as to how the "mad" brothers and sisters in Canada were faring overcame the villagers of Orlovka, who decided to send Alex Varabeoff and another delegate to look for land in Canada. With these delegates, went Dunia, and her son Peter Petrovich Verigin and his wife Anna and their baby, also named Peter Petrovich Verigin, and a daughter three years of age. With them went an adventurous lad of sixteen, Peter Morozoff.

Rumors that the party was on its way circulated among the brothers and sisters in Canada. Peter Vasilivich, noncommittal about it all, said that if Dunia and Peter Petrovich wished to visit Canada, that was their business. Canada was a free country, and he would not stop their coming. He, for his part, held no grudge against Dunia, nor any of the misguided brothers, for to do so would not be Christian.

When Peter Vasilivich received his wife and son in Canada, doubt soon assailed him. He looked at Peter Petrovich through half-closed eyes, as much as to say, "I know you, Peter." And the son, with sly audacity, said in all but words, "And I know you, too."

The son, looking like a Cossack in his knee boots, white trousers and blue blouse, baited his father continuously. So much alike were they that the young Verigin unerringly sensed what would inwardly rile the older one. The mother's disillusioned eyes accused him, and he wished that he had not sent for them. They lived in a separate house across from his, and only the grandchildren, with whom he played occasionally, gave him any solace.

Good Dukhobors were aghast at Peter Petrovich—at his swaggering, his lewd talk, his furtive cigarette smoking.

"Da, he is my father," said Peter Petrovich to an astonished audience. "He may be Kristos to many of you and Petushka to you all, but I tell you truly to me he is only another man, an obstinate and sly old man, who is fooling you."

Appeals to filial affection and warnings of God's wrath failing, Peter Vasilivich threatened Peter Petrovich with excommunication from his purse.

"What do I care for your money, you old *bandeit*," replied the son in a fit of temper. "It is not yours. You have taken it from the believers, the simple ones, those who believe in your lies."

Peter Vasilivich wilted as if stabbed with a dagger. Never

before had anyone spoken to him so, and never had he felt so defenseless.

Peter Petrovich, to prove that he was not all braggadocio, left the village and found work on a railway extra-gang. There he was a wonder to the other Slavs working on the grade. In furious bursts of energy he would wield his pick and shovel; then, sweating, a damp wisp of hair matted against his forehead, he would lie down in the fresh plowing and weeds of the right of way, half closing his yellowish-gray eyes with an air of "disturb me, and I will show you what will happen." On evenings, swinging a leg from the bunk-car door, or stretched out beside a smouldering smudge to discourage the mosquitoes, he would release his imagination in tales of his exploits in Russia; his baritone voice rising at times to a shrill, stallionlike squeal; his listeners occasionally daring to ask a question, but more often nudging one another in the darkness.

In a few weeks, tiring of pork and beans and "C. P. R. strawberries" (prunes), and the limited life of an extra-gang, he returned to the villages of the South Colony. Toil was good for the soul, even though he had lots of money, he told the villagers. Everyone should work. No one should be lazy.

His free manner and fast talk appealed to many of the younger men and women. He read newspapers aloud to them, told them of his schooling in Elizavetpol, declared that all should know how to read and write, and intimated that his father was keeping them in ignorance.

While he was staying in Oспенia village, in the Saskatchewan River Colony, with his relatives, Ivan and Semon Katelnikoff, Sons of Freedom pilgrims entered the village. They had been traveling from village to village, urging their brothers to free the horses and cattle and seek the promised land again. Their evangelical mode was to disrobe, after which a spokesman would deliver an oration on "freedom for all creation." When they entered the village, the pilgrims wished to see the son of the father. They hoped that he, a young man, and, reportedly, having many ideas about how to live a life, would see the light of freedom.

On the village street by the home of Ivan Katelnikoff, Peter greeted the nude assemblage, apprising it as might a cattle buyer. Undismayed, they stood before him, hopefully. Instead he railed against their belief in freedom; soon an audience gathered to witness the spectacle and marvel at the young man's oratory.

Disconcerted at this unexpected outburst, a bony Son of Free-

dom, his beard reaching nearly to his naked belly, shuffled his feet in the dust of the street. But Maria's faith in freedom could not be shaken so. Head high, eyes fastened on Peter, breasts protruding from beneath her folded arms, she interrupted him, forcing him to listen to her.

"God did not have us born with clothes on our bodies," she said. "God chose to have all humans and all animals born naked, but only humans are so foolish that they cover their nakedness."

"Foolish woman," Peter shouted at her. "You are one hundred per cent crazy. Do you not see that God gave cows tails to cover their nakedness? Did God give you a tail?"

"I do not need a tail," said Maria. "I am a daughter of freedom."

"You need brains in a head that is *pustia*," Peter retorted. "God gave you some brains, and you were supposed to use those brains to cover yourself, instead of a tail."

Pausing momentarily, he glared at the little group through narrowed eyelids. Behind the front ranks of the serious-faced audience came a hysterical giggle.

"God will surely give you tails," he went on. "Pravda. He will grow tails for you all! But they will not be cows' tails, nor human Son of Freedom tails. They will be the tails of devils, and you, who will wear them, will yourselves turn into devils with horns on your heads. Ponimaesh?"

So impressive was this prognostication, all but two of the disappointed group dressed and went home to their villages. Only stout Maria and a man, in whose eyes shone an undimmed light of fanaticism, continued on their way to preach the gospel of freedom.

The impression that Peter Petrovich was making on the Dukhobors in Canada decided Peter Vasilivich to send the younger man and his mother back to Russia.

On landing at Batum, Peter Petrovich and his entourage went directly to Orlovka village in the Wet Mountains. There he stayed some six months before reappearing in his native village of Slavanka. He told the Wet Mountain people that he had returned to help them, and that it was best not to go to Canada. He chose to say little about his father. As if to secure his semileadership of the Wet Mountain Dukhobors, he urged them to work hard on the land and live a true Christian life. He himself spent much time fishing, riding horseback, playing cards and visiting the hotels in the towns. When he preached the gospel on Sunday

mornings and visited members of his following in the course of his rides over the countryside, his faithful offered him presents of money, which he accepted, "only to please the people, slava Bohu."

Peter Vasilivich, his hopes of a family Utopia turned to bitterness, shifted his attention to a sly battle of wits with the Canadian government of 1906. Three years had elapsed since his arrival in Canada, the government was pressing the Dukhobors to comply with the land laws of the country by signing individually for their homesteads. Frank Oliver, who had succeeded Clifford Sifton as minister of the interior, warned Verigin the land would be taken away from all those who, within two months, failed to comply with the laws.

Peter, secretly fearing that compliance with the law would further disintegrate his empire, told the minister of the interior that "each Dukhobor must decide for himself what he will do. It is not right or Christian that I or any one man should tell them what to do. We are all equal."

Simultaneously he passed word among his followers that they should not sign for their homesteads. The faithful in turn, when questioned by government officials, said that they had decided it was not Christian to own land as individuals.

Verigin went to Winnipeg that October and suggested in an evasive interview with the minister of the interior, that he thought the Dukhobors would become citizens if given sufficient time. Oliver pointed out that they had had seven years in which to make up their minds. Now the government was determined that they comply with Canadian law, as they had agreed to do before entering the country.

Peter, sensing trouble ahead with the government and wishing not to be present when it came, decided to leave Canada for a time. With Anastasia Holubeova and another young woman, he set out for New York. The party included old Ivan Mahortoff, now ninety-eight years of age, Semon Rebin, Peter's private secretary, and two "delegates who might look for land."

They arrived in New York in September, and established themselves in the Hotel Marlborough. Each morning Peter took his entourage for a walk, during which he preached on the bustle and iniquity of urban life. The better to impress them, he at times found it necessary to see each alone in his room, and thus it was that the instruction in Christian living often lasted through the night.

On September 26, he sent a telegram to the Society of Friends in Philadelphia: "I, Peter Verigin, from Dukhobors arrived in New York. Desire to meet you in Philadelphia or other place named by you. Answer immediately."

The Quakers had had no previous intimation that he was in New York or that he contemplated honoring them with a visit. Joseph Elkington Jr., who now had a shrewder insight into Dukhobor affairs, invited the party to Philadelphia.

When they arrived, Peter said, through his interpreter, "We came here to visit you, because we might go to Russia, and we thought we should see our friends who have helped us so much in the past. Praise God."

Elkington, bent on getting to the bottom of their passive resistance to Quaker schools, questioned Peter as if he were in the witness stand. Peter blandly evaded direct answers.

"Are you pleased that the Society of Friends has opened a school at Petrofka on the North Saskatchewan River, and brought Herman Fast from Rumania to teach in it?" asked Elkington.

"I think that all the brothers and sisters will soon decide to move from the North Saskatchewan River Colony and join with the Dukhobors near Yorkton," Peter replied.

"Why should they leave their fertile farms?"

"They wish to be near the other brothers."

"Did you ask them to move?"

"No, I advised them not to move, but they must decide for themselves. That is the Dukhobor way," said Peter, looking down at his shiny Russian boots.

Elkington, aware that Peter had strongly urged the North Saskatchewan Colony to move, but that it had for the most part refused, asked why Hannah Bellow's school had been closed.

"She did not dress or think like the Dukhobors," said Peter, "so they did not want her to teach their children."

Elkington, who had reliable information that Peter had told the families with children to move away from the school, continued to ask questions which brought forth evasive answers and calculated lies.

Peter said he greatly favored education, and that schoolhouses were being built in each of the sixty villages, but that not all Dukhobors thought as he did, and each had the right to his own opinions. That was the Christian way.

"Then why are horses and cattle being kept in some of the schools?" Elkington asked.

"That is very sad," said Peter. "But in some villages there are not yet enough buildings, and the poor animals who toil with us in the fields must also have a warm place to sleep."

Asked for the second time if he objected to the Society of Friends bringing young Peter Makaroff and several other Dukhobor children to farms near Philadelphia, Verigin said he wished the Dukhobors and the Quakers "could have a better understanding of education."

Peter turned the conversation to land, but he made no mention of his advice to his followers that they refuse to comply with the Homestead Act, nor of the gathering storm which must break upon their heads as a result of their stubbornness at his direction. He said the brothers and sisters might wish to buy 1,000 acres near Philadelphia, and added that they would not wish to become citizens of the United States.

The party, standing or sitting at barely perceptible signs from Peter, visited Arch Street Meetinghouse, Independence Hall, and Select School. Peter and Ivan Mahortoff addressed the Alumni Association, and wherever the party went, Paul Planedin, of saintly countenance, gave his listeners the benefit of his knowledge of polemics and the Christian way.

Having accomplished all that might be expected in Philadelphia, Peter and his troupe, with the exception of Semon Rebin who returned to Canada, boarded a steamer for Europe. En route to St. Petersburg via Berlin they visited the Reichstag. Anastasia, looking up into the great dome above the building which housed the German lawmakers, began to sing, others of the group joining her. German guards, astounded at this breach of kultur, ordered the Dukhobors out of the building.

Peter did not go to Caucasia. At St. Petersburg he gained an interview with Stolypin, the minister of the interior, who held out no hope for Peter's proposal that the Dukhobors return to Russia, there to settle in a contiguous group on some frontier "where there is good land and where the Christians would pay taxes to the government, but not at the same time be conscripted in an army."

Records are not available of how Peter and his party spent the remainder of their visit in Russia, but within two months he received woeful letters from the Dukhobors stating that the "Cana-

dian government will take our land because we will not be subjects of the English King."

The minister of the interior, had moved speedily. Late in 1906, he appointed a commission, under the chairmanship of John McDougall, to investigate Dukhobor lands. Early in January of 1907, McDougall with his staff, which included Michael White, official interpreter, drove with horses and sleighs through deep snow and bitter cold. They ascertained who had complied with the law and who had not, and explained the government's final intention. Their verbal explanations were supplemented by a circular letter in English and Russian which they distributed among the people of every colony.

Besides engaging in involved arguments with Commissioner McDougall, the faithful sent lengthy petitions and delegations to the minister of the interior.

"The Earth," said one of these epistles, "is God's creation. The Earth is our common mother who feeds us, protects us, rejoices with love from the moment of our birth until we go to our eternal rest in her maternal bosom."

But not even this poetical entreaty, as if penned by a Nekrasov, could soften the "stone heart" of the government. The government agents went about their task of repossessing "God's earth" with a quiet but disturbing air of finality.

By June, every Dukhobor man who had failed to comply with the Homestead Act, was made to relinquish all but fifteen acres for himself and fifteen acres for each member of his family. Thus, nearly 100,000 acres of Community land, some of which had been cultivated, reverted to the government and for the second time became available to homesteaders willing to possess it in accord with the laws of Canada.

Because of the trek of Community Dukhobors from the North Saskatchewan River Colony to join their brothers of the Thunder Hill and South colonies, and the abandonment of a number of homesteads by Independents who desired land removed from the vicinity of Communal villages, there were a total of 1,600 homesteads of one hundred and sixty acres each thrown open for settlement at Prince Albert and Yorkton land offices. In Yorkton, so great was the rush for land by non-Dukhobor settlers that many more applicants than there were homesteads besieged the land office for days. To cope with these land-hungry men, Royal North West Mounted Police kept order from early morning until late at night. Applicants were allowed to form in line for each

day's township. Wooden railings resembling cattle chutes were built inside the land office to ensure the applicants would reach the counter one at a time and in the order of priority in the queue. Early each morning the police cleared the sidewalk so as to give every prospective settler an even chance. The Community Dukhobors, for the most part, accepted their loss of land with a fatalistic "We knew it would happen."

Peter Verigin, on his return to Canada, found the number of Dukhobors living on land for which the heads of families had signed in accord with law, had increased to 1,000. These were now British subjects in name, though many continued an allegiance to Petushka.

While the increase in "Independents," of varying degree of independence, was a blow to Peter, he was pleased to find that those who had accepted their fate and fifteen acres within his Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood were even more faithful than before.

Throughout the summer of 1907, Verigin urged his followers to work hard on the land that remained theirs, the younger men to work on the railway grades and in lumber camps, and turn every cent into the Community fund. He planned to purchase a large block of land outright, whereby *his* subjects need not become *British* subjects to hold their homesteads. Eventually, he turned his eyes to the Province of British Columbia.

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NUDITY IN FORT WILLIAM

WHEN THE HUSH of late summer, which invariably precedes the hum of harvest on the prairies, had settled over the ripening grain, and the birds hiding in the stillness of the woods gathered strength for their flight in the fall, there was, in that August of 1907, a significant restiveness among the Sons of Freedom. At first, Ivan Kislin, and other bearded prophets, philosophized only within their inner circles; but soon each was openly preaching for a great exodus.

"The time has come," said Ivan, "when we must all go to that place of freedom and eternal sun, where we will live happily in the Spirit of Christ."

Peter Verigin said little concerning this evangelizing, other than that "each must decide for himself." Some among the apostles held him a traitor to God's way of life, and these, ever a disturbing factor in the community, he hoped would depart never to return. Moreover, a pilgrimage with its consequent publicity might embarrass the government, with the result that he could say that his persecuted people had been driven from their land by a heartless government.

The zealots were disappointed when only eighty including twenty boys and girls eventually set out down the railway track in search of the promised land. Ivan and the apostles, who had hoped for a mass exodus, contented themselves with sorrowful prayers for those "who do not yet see the light"; and the pilgrims, singing melancholy psalms, set out with some money in their pockets to buy food along the way, marched on foot in the same direction as had the pilgrimage of 1902. Passing by Minnedosa this time, when they reached Winnipeg, they rested several days in All Peoples Mission, where the superintendent, J. S. Woodsworth was kind to them, but declined their several invitations to join the expedition. They continued to Kenora, Ontario. In the rugged rock and evergreen country by the northern edge of Lake of the Woods, it was blueberry time, and they gathered pails of fruit, ate all they required and sold the surplus to merchants in the town. For small rent they procured a vacant building not far from the

railway roundhouse. They slept on the floor, their bodies lying like spokes in several wheels, heads on the communal pillows forming grotesque hubs. Railwaymen and townsfolk peered in on them, and Jimmy Rutledge, a lad who worked in the yards, was so curious that almost every evening he came to hear them talk of God and Christ.

In October they resumed their journey, and arousing curiosity in many persons along the three hundred miles to Fort William, they reached that port on the north shore of Lake Superior, November 1. There were seventy-eight of them by actual count of the city police.

"Why are you counting us?" asked Boris Sachatoff in English.

"To find out how many of you there are," said the sergeant, not unkindly.

"That is not necessary," replied Boris. "God has already counted us. He knows how many we are."

Boris Sachatoff, who had joined them in the West, became their spokesman. A Russian-Jew who once mended watches in New York, he was a weaver of theories about life, love, liberty, politics, and the pursuit of happiness here and hereafter. Like the Sons of Freedom he had allowed his beard to grow, and, scissors had not recently touched his hair which flowed back from his generous ears. With bright brown eyes peering from beneath bushy eyebrows, he was most happy when propounding a philosophical theory. Though his enunciation of English was tinged with the phonetics of Russian, his volubility in both languages equaled his enthusiasm.

Now, with the Russian-speaking Sons of Freedom as background, Boris enjoyed unprecedented opportunity to command the attention of audiences. He addressed the citizens of Fort William on more than one occasion. Representing himself as a Dukhobor, he propounded "our belief in freedom" to government officials; and to Robert L. Borden, Leader of the Conservative party, who with Police Chief Dodds of Fort William, visited the pilgrims in the rambling old house that had once been an Anglican parsonage and later a house of ill fame, and in which now the Dukhobors were to live until spring.

The Sons were pleased to have such a man as Sachatoff among them. That he represented himself as a Dukhobor mattered little, for at any time they could deny that he was one of them. Besides, there were zealots among the pilgrims who held any man a true Dukhobor, a true Son of Freedom, if he but lived up to the prin-

ciples. When a reporter on the *Daily Times-Journal* came to interview the pilgrims, Sachatoff, referring to himself as "Paul," replied to the questions with impressive seriousness.

"My people," said Sachatoff standing very erect; "my people desire to leave Canada, because here it is very cold, and also they are opposed to government in any form. They believe in every man governing himself as an equal and a brother. No property, no ownership of land, no crime, no prisons, no interference, no laws and no need for laws. No man should be punished on earth. Animals should not be killed nor enslaved to toil for men. . . . War is wholesale murder."

"Where will you go from Canada?" asked the reporter, who was conscious of a feeling of inferiority before the saintlike stolid faces watching him.

Sachatoff could not say definitely. They would remain in Fort William during the winter. In spring they would go to Montreal "and then across the water." How they would accomplish these things, they themselves did not know, nor were they worried. "The Lord," said Sachatoff with a gesture of finality, "the Lord will provide."

During November and December they lived quietly in the old parsonage, and both men and women obtained casual jobs. There was brotherhood among them, each sharing with the other, and some, at times, becoming so filled with zealous generosity, they gave away to outsiders, odds and ends of their small possessions.

For some unrevealed reason, on New Year's Day of 1908, twelve men and seven women chose to demonstrate their belief in freedom by parading nude through the snowy streets of Fort William. Astonished citizens looked out from their frosted windows, and then went to their doors. Soon a half-embarrassed, chuckling, giggling group of spectators followed on the sidewalk. But the Dukhobors seemingly paid as little attention to the "ignorant ones" as they did to the sub-zero weather. They went down the center of residential Dease Street as naked as the day they were born.

In his house on Dease Street, Herbert A. Tremayne, manager of the Hudson's Bay fur depot, heard a dirge so mournful, when compared with the reveling songs of the night before, that he attributed the eerie melody to the same cause from whence came his headache, and, went on with his shaving. But as the singing persisted in his ears, becoming louder and louder, he looked out

of the window, saw the naked men and women trudging through the snow, and nicked himself with his razor.

The growing parade continued until policemen herded the naked section of it into Robert's Pool Room. Police Chief Dodds and Mayor Murphy ordered blankets and horse-drawn cabs, and the Dukhobors rode serenely back to their parsonage.

"It is terrible," said Vasili, "how the English Christians drink vodka and shout all night on what they call their New Year's evening. But when we who do not drink even wine, do not smoke tobacco, do not eat meat; when we go for a walk with our bodies as God made them, then *they* are very surprised and make us go home."

"Da, da, and all because we have broken a man-made law which does not concern us," sighed Andri.

The novelty of a nude parade on New Year's Day in Fort William provided Boris Sachatoff with renewed opportunity for philosophizing to citizens who sought explanations for this strange behavior.

In February it was revealed to Ivan Kislin that he should fast for forty days. The fasting proved too much for his weakened body, and he died. His brothers, who had neither called a doctor nor notified anyone, held a meeting to decide what to do with the corpse. They lifted it, covered with a blanket, onto a sled. Twelve men and twelve women harnessed themselves to a long rope and set out for the "English cemetery."

A curious crowd followed on either sidewalk. A policeman stopped them.

"What have you got on that sleigh?" he asked.

"Only a corpse," replied Nikolai who knew some English.

"Only a corpse!" echoed one of the spectators.

"Where do you think you are taking it?" the policeman asked, pulling out his note book.

"To English cemetery."

"Have you a permit for burial?"

"*Charwa?*"

"Have you a paper, a permit? You cannot bury a body without a permit."

"Jesus Christ gave him permit when he died. Man-made permit not necessary," said Nikolai who went on to explain that the corpse did not need a coffin either. "He" would feel as comfortable without one. Nor was a grave necessary. If "he" were put in a

grave, the foxes could not eat him, and the foxes were God's creatures, needing food as did humans.

But the policeman insisted that the body be taken to the undertakers. There, Dr. Birdsell, the coroner, pronounced starvation the cause of death. In the course of the inquiry the coroner's jury visited the old parsonage. The place was almost bare of furniture. Upstairs in a large room, which at the time was very warm, men, women and children, all in a nude state, sat on the floor or stood eyeing the "visitors." In the center of the floor was a communal pile of peanuts and apples. Members of the jury noted that the Dukhobors ate only vegetables, fruits and nuts, and these uncooked.

Whatever their faults and vagaries, the sons and daughters of freedom neither begged nor stole. Their wants were simple, and these they supplied from money earned at labor.

When the snow had gone and the days became warm toward the end of March, they began sunning their nude bodies in the yard of the parsonage. Whether to plant a garden which would be a garden of Eden and at the same time provide them with vegetables, or whether to continue on their way to the promised land, they were unable to decide.

"We should wait until the Spirit tells us," said Tania.

In the meantime, the neighbors complained to the police, and they found it necessary to patrol the house each day, to keep the curious from going in. And when two commercial travelers were caught peeping and fined \$1 and costs for trespassing, they protested loudly at the indignity of being arrested by a full-blooded Red Indian, Simon Penassi, six-feet tall in his moccasins and fearless guardian of the law.

On a Sunday morning, the constable on picket duty reported to headquarters that naked Dukhobors were burning their clothing on an adjacent lot. Chief Dodds and Inspector Watkins arrived to see men and women running from the house to the fire, tossing clothing on the flames.

"Stop that!" shouted the chief.

But the naked sons and daughters, as if they had not heard him, continued to throw clothing on the fire.

Out from the doorway hobbled a woman, a skirt in her hands; behind her an elephantine man carrying his trousers. To the fire they ran resignedly dropping their clothing in the flames; plodding back toward the house.

Chief Dodds picked up a wet, muddy broom which was leaning

against the door and swatted the big fellow across his bare buttocks as he entered.

"Home run!" shouted a bystander, and cheers and laughter rose from the amused and slightly blushing crowd in the street. Had Boris Sachatoff described this incident in Yiddish, he would have said, "Er hot ihm a patsh geton in hinten."

After this circus, which Chief Dodds and Inspector Watkins viewed in good humor, the chief warned the Dukhobors that they would be arrested and imprisoned if they persisted in appearing nude in public. He explained to them that the citizens had just as much right to expect them to clothe themselves when outside of their own houses as the faithful might have to go naked within it.

Complaints of nudity continued to reach the police station. Naked men and women walked in the vicinity of the parsonage. The police arrested nineteen offenders, ten men and nine women, who had burned their clothes. They were taken to the police station and on April 2, sentenced to six months for "indecent exposure."

Magistrate Palling committed the men to Central Prison and the women to Mercer Reformatory in Toronto. It was then a problem to convey the naked prisoners the five miles to Port Arthur Jail, the first lap of their journey East. Horse-drawn cabs, and blankets which the Sons of Freedom refused to wrap around themselves, were ordered. In Port Arthur, Gaoler Penfold objected to receiving the naked prisoners, and the police compelled them to use their blankets. The government of the province of Ontario was opposed to housing the prisoners in Ontario jails. "Send them back to Saskatchewan where they belong," was the cry. Conservative members took advantage of the situation to remind the Liberals of their original sin of bringing "these mad Russian fanatics to Canada."

After negotiations with the department of justice, Ottawa, all the Sons of Freedom, including the prisoners who had not served their sentence, were loaded into two Canadian Pacific colonist cars and dispatched to Yorkton, Saskatchewan, under police surveillance.

When the train steamed into Yorkton early one morning toward the end of April, the usual inquisitive crowd had gathered on the station platform. The returning pilgrims, looking from the windows of their coaches, began undressing. Mounted policemen, several of them English bachelors with a Victorian sense of

propriety, warned away the curious and locked the coach doors.

While they waited on a sidetrack by the grain elevators, the Dukhobors munched apples and peanuts. At the same time, Yorkton's town council dispatched frantic telegrams to the Honorable Frank Oliver, minister of the interior, to the Honorable A. B. Aylesworth, minister of justice, and to others in authority:

"Fort William contingent of vagrant and presumably insane Dukhobors shipped here in charge of official of Ontario government. Still in coaches here. Induced to come to Yorkton under misrepresentations that they were going to warmer climate. Dukhobors in surrounding villages refuse to acknowledge them. Citizens strongly protest against their being dumped here. Some twenty of them in nude state endeavoring to indecently expose themselves. Provincial government informs us matter is being taken up with immigration department of Dominion government. Matter extremely urgent. Please wire immediate instructions."

When Peter Verigin was approached, he said he could not be responsible for the "mad brothers."

The town of Yorkton refused to assume the responsibility for two carloads of fanatics from Ontario, who would purchase nothing but peanuts and apples from the local merchants.

The government of Saskatchewan declined to act, since the Dukhobors had been brought into the country before Saskatchewan was carved out of the Northwest Territories in 1905.

The Ontario government was not responsible, nor the city of Fort William, because the Dukhobors had gone to Ontario from Saskatchewan.

The Federal government was not responsible because the province of Saskatchewan was the domicile of the Dukhobors.

In the telegrams back and forth, the authorities attempted to shift responsibility one to the other.

In the meantime, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company required its colonist coaches, and a grain elevator agent complained that the sidetrack was beginning to smell because there were no sanitary arrangements other than those ordinarily provided in a railway coach.

So mounted police herded the sons and daughters of freedom across the tracks to the Exhibition Grounds and into the Agricultural Hall. After they had stayed there about three weeks and had eaten several bushels of peanuts, they were removed to a house on the outskirts of Yorkton, because the Yorkton Exhi-

bition Board would soon require the Agricultural Hall for the annual fair and circus.

The mounted police arrested twelve ringleaders who were sentenced to six months on a charge of vagrancy. Those who were not arrested now refused food, so their children were taken away from them and the most emaciated adults fed with a stomach pump. Eventually, worn out with the struggle against the government, against the police, against wearing clothes, against eating, against themselves, they turned against their againstness, and agreed to depart for their villages.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

BRITISH COLUMBIA TREK

VERIGIN, WHO FOR MONTHS had been considering moving his followers to a place of seclusion, "where no government will interfere," set out westward for the province of British Columbia, intending to purchase land outright, thus to avoid the objectionable Homestead Act and its consequences of British citizenship.

Before he left Saskatchewan, most of his followers of the North Saskatchewan River Colony hitched their communal horses and wagons to all that was moveable, and trekked eastward across the prairie to join the faithful in the South and Thunder Hill colonies. Dukhobors who remained were "Independents," of varying degree. They held no allegiance to Peter Verigin, but insisted they were Dukhobors nevertheless.

In Petrofka village of the North Saskatchewan River Colony, education had gained a foothold. The limited success of the Quaker school there had been a factor in Peter's decision to abandon the colony. A potential threat to his authority was the Saskatchewan government's declared intention to open school districts throughout the settlement.

To the Quaker school in Petrofka went Gregori Makaroff's son, Peter, who with the other venturesome ones had returned from the Quaker farm schools near Philadelphia. And now Gregori announced that his son should have high school education.

Young Peter Makaroff along with the twenty Dukhobor boys and several girls who studied in Petrofka schoolhouse, were favorably impressed with their teacher, Eleanor Martin, who won their hearts with patient kindness. Wilna Moore, daughter of a Presbyterian missionary, an energetic and well-intentioned soul interested in far-off places, came to teach conversational English. Herman Fast, the Holland born pacifist, who, with his Russian wife had come from Rumania to Saskatchewan at the suggestion of the Philadelphia Quakers, continued to teach Russian. The hospitable Fast home was a center of culture for teachers, students, and for several young men from St. Petersburg, who

had been lured to Canada by Fenimore Cooper's book, *The Last of the Mohicans*.

On his return from the mountains of southern British Columbia, Verigin ignored the heretical North Saskatchewan River Colony. It was in the Thunder Hill and South colonies that he unfolded his vision of exodus from the wide prairies of Saskatchewan to the narrow valleys of the Kootenay country.

"The land is new. Few people are living there, and on it grow large trees which we will use to build new houses," he told them.

"Will woollen bourkas be necessary to keep out the rain in winter, like in the Wet Mountains?" asked a woman.

"The rain there is not cold, nor is the snow as deep as in the Wet Mountains," Peter replied. "There is enough rain, but if rain should not always come, water flows out of the mountains, and we will use it for our land. It is possible to grow many fruits; apples, plums, cherries, pears, and strawberries—even water-melons—without hotbeds," he said.

Sons of Freedom were pleased with the prospect of living in a country where horses, sheepskin coats and machinery could be dispensed with. This country, about 1,000 miles to the southwest, seemed like a promised land.

Community Dukhobors believed that all the good Dukhobors could live better on 30,000 acres in British Columbia than they had been able to do on 300,000 acres in Saskatchewan.

"Even if the land will cost as much as thirty dollars an acre in *Kolombia*, we will there be better off," said Ivan Konkin.

"In British Columbia," Peter explained, "We will buy our land and own it. So it will not be necessary to be subjects of the English King to keep our land. No schools are there, and the air is very pure, like in Switzerland, so we will live in good health, in a Christian way, with no government to bother us, no rheumatism, and few mosquitoes, *slava Bohu*."

Leaving behind him enthusiasm for an exodus, Peter returned to British Columbia where, near Nelson, an advance party of eighty-five Community men under the direction of John Sherbinin, cleared land on which Verigin had taken an option to purchase. Sherbinin, who spoke English with comparative ease, and was recognized for his cleverness with machinery, ran the saw-mill, and that fall the first houses of the new settlement of Brilliant were built.

Nikolai Zibaroff, with a zeal reminiscent of his first years in Canada, went with an advance party fifty miles farther west to

the town of Grand Forks, where they cut logs for houses of a second colony.

In the spring of 1909, Verigin took up his option on the first land of the Brilliant Colony near the old gold mining camp known to prospectors as Waterloo Camp.

Eight hundred Dukhobors left Saskatchewan in a special train to Kootenay Landing where, for the first time since they had crossed the ocean, they found themselves on a boat again, but this time on a long narrow lake and happily close to shore. In the Brilliant and Grand Forks colonies, they set to work with a will, clearing land, planting vegetables, building houses. Again they showed their ability and enthusiasm in plowing virgin soil.

Peter Verigin had borrowed \$100,000 from a loan company, pledging Community land in Saskatchewan as security. With this loan together with money from the Saskatchewan central treasury and sums coaxed from the pockets of migrating Dukhobors, he financed the British Columbia settlement.

In 1910 another contingent came. A lumber mill was built, fruit trees planted, and from previously cultivated land purchased from English ranchers, a harvest of fruit was gathered.

In the same year, Verigin bought the jam factory from the Kootenay Preserving Company in the town of Nelson, twenty-five miles east of Brilliant. So great was the industry and cleanliness of the Dukhobors who worked in the factory, that soon the plant was selling more jam than had its original owners. John Sherbinin named the Dukhobor jam "K. C. Brand," a trade name that was to become famous with Western Canadian housewives.

In 1911, more than 1,000 men, women and children came, and more virgin forest gave way to orchards. On the Grand Forks property, Peter Verigin selected a ranch house for his home, a commodious place of English colonial architecture, on a hillside overlooking a fruit grove.

He extended the communal way of living, by ordering that two large houses should constitute a small village on about one hundred acres of land. Built in pairs, each two-story house accommodated thirty-five to fifty persons. The upstairs was divided into bedrooms, approximately nine to ten feet square; each with a window, and a doorway covered by curtains. Downstairs was the large room with its long table and benches, and a combination kitchen and dining room, also with a table, benches, and a Russian oven. Back of each house was a storehouse and a bathhouse, and,

farther removed, an outdoor toilet. All were kept clean with much scrubbing, but were insufficiently ventilated, in accord with Dukhobor tradition.

Brilliant was the business center, and here John Sherbinin ordered clothing and tools by wholesale carloads, to the displeasure of the retail merchants of Nelson and Grand Forks. Each Community member could ask for whatever goods required. Seldom did anyone take away more than their share, because in the communal houses each knew what the other brought home from the warehouse.

The children were above average in health, except for tuberculosis. Doctors were seldom called, either for children or adults. Peter Verigin, himself a model of physical health, spoke contemptuously of the medical profession. But he equipped a dispensary and hospital near Brilliant, engaging a quack doctor to ensure the venture being the failure that it was. After the services of the quack had been dispensed with, he maintained the empty building as a reminder to the unfortunate Dukhobors who had been treated there, and as a show place for visitors.

New though fruit-growing was to the Dukhobors, their orchards were the cleanest and most productive in the Kootenay country. They acquired skill in grafting fruit trees, and from their vineyards on the hill slopes of Grand Forks Colony they measured the grape harvest in tons.

Not against doing profitable business with the government they sold bricks, baked in their own kiln at Grand Forks, for government buildings.

In Brilliant Colony they built a concrete reservoir having a capacity of 1,000,000 gallons. From this Peter planned to pipe water to the villages. The reservoir would be filled from a mountain spring supplemented by a pumping plant on the banks of the Kootenay River. The plant, one of the largest in the interior of British Columbia, later generated electricity.

Besides the two main colonies of Brilliant and Grand Forks, settlements spread to Champion Creek, Glade, Pass Creek and Crescent Valley. By the autumn of 1912, there were more than 5,000 Dukhobors in British Columbia. At least seven hundred were "school children" who had never set foot inside a school, and whose knowledge of the English language was much less than that of the average French-Canadian boy or girl of Quebec province.

For the 14,403 acres, all but \$321,079 had been paid on the

total purchase price of \$646,007, and the land had considerably increased in value. Titles to the property were registered in the name of Peter Verigin, who willed it to the Community at his death.

As Peter himself said, all would have been well within his new empire, had the government not interfered by attempting to have the children attend school, and by trying to collect statistics of births, marriages and deaths.

Under pressure from school authorities in Grand Forks, the Dukhobors of that colony sent a few children to school. But attendance dwindled and within twelve months ceased entirely. Peter built a school at Brilliant where selected children attended during one term, after which he closed the school and told the authorities that, "the Dukhobors do not wish to send their children to school.

When Dukhobors at Grand Forks repeatedly refused to register deaths among them, four men were sentenced to three months imprisonment in Nelson Jail for violation of the "Births, Deaths, Marriages and Registration Act."

To the Dukhobors, these "poor prisoners of a harsh government" became martyrs. They were Nikolai Zebin, Ivan Negrin, Ivan and Vasili Demovskoff.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

FURTHER PHILOSOPHIZING

THE ELASTIC CREED of the Sons of Freedom allowed for various interpretations within the cult. Near Canora, Saskatchewan, was a particular group not averse to their children learning to read and write outside government schools. To this intelligentsia, Boris Sachatoff, the Russian Jew of the Fort William episode, now attached himself. He lived in their villages, except for brief periods when he turned to his trade of watchmaker to earn a few dollars. His needs, like his clothes, were few. He neither smoked, drank, nor gambled. In a stout fair-haired daughter of freedom he found temporary affinity. Many an interesting philosophical discussion he had with another watch repairer, Sergei Petroff, who had come to Canora from Kharkov. Petroff, originally a draughtsman, had journeyed from Russia to Saskatchewan to live with the Dukhobors about whom he had read, and whom he considered "dear good Christian people."

Petroff's wife, Grunia, a kindly, impulsively optimistic woman with restless blue eyes, was a Russian Jewess, also enamored of the Christian idealism of the Sons of Freedom Dukhobors. Staying with the Petroff's in Canora was Count Vasili Vasilivich Kapneist, young officer on extended leave from the Tsar's army. Another guest was Maria Alexandrovna Afanaseva of Petrograd, who "came to Canada to die." Only once did she speak of her romance with Prince Michael Romanov, which had resulted in this drastic decision. Her brown eyes enhanced with a sad beauty, black hair reaching well past her waist, of stately carriage, she was a woman to be looked at a second time in either St. Petersburg or Canora.

Boris Sachatoff looked up to Maria, literally and metaphorically. Their platonic friendship led to midsummer walking tours. When rain threatened or the mosquitoes were particularly hungry, they would stay overnight in a Sons of Freedom village. At times they would camp in the bush, where around a fire they discussed life's inexplicabilities far into nights of stillness broken only by the hooting of an owl or the wailing of a coyote.

During this period, Maria attempted to teach school at Veri-

gin. But this annoyed Peter who placed so many obstacles in her way that she gave up the idea.

Her uncle in Russia having left to her a small fortune for which now she had no use, she opened her large trunks, allowed her friends to help themselves to dresses, books and jewelry. This generosity was appreciated by the Sons of Freedom intelligentsia, who were as communal with their possessions.

It was an idealistically happy little group, while it lasted. The ultrahospitable Mrs. Petroff gave a farewell dinner to the sons and daughters leaving for British Columbia.

But there were a few Sons of Freedom to whom Verigin's pseudo-promised land in British Columbia seemed a snare and a delusion. They felt that Petushka was much too interested in material things, and that his house near Verigin was too big for one man, and anyway it was a waste because he did not live in it.

So one summer's night, Alex Makasaeff, Alex Mahortoff and Peter Holoboff, with about twenty men, women, and children, marched singing hymns to Peter's unoccupied house. Before sunrise, they set it afire, took off their clothes, threw them in the fire and stood there singing psalms of sorrow.

Peter was in British Columbia, Michael Cazakoff, Community manager at Verigin, was six miles away. Cazakoff combed his hair down over his forehead, cranked the community automobile and drove to the fire.

"Why have you done this terrible thing?" he shouted at the naked men and women. "It is wrong to destroy property."

"The house was too big," said Alex Makasaeff. "We are supposed to live equally."

"The sky is a bigger house than it," said Holoboff pointing to the flames, "yet no one could burn a sky, because God made the sky and under it is room for all creation."

A crowd of Community people had gathered. The sun was up. The upper story of the house collapsed in the flames. Cazakoff sweated with heat, anger and fear. Lukian Verigin, a nephew of Peter's, brandished a whip at the Sons of Freedom. Vasili Podovinikoff brought his horsewhip down over the naked back of Peter Holoboff, and this seemed a signal for a general assault. Community men whipped and kicked the passive Sons of Freedom, dragged them by their beards and hair.

"We will not run away," shouted Alex Makasaeff, shielding his face from the blows. "It is *you* who will suffer for this. You can only whip our bodies, but God will whip your souls!"

They did not run away, not even Scripnik the Ukranian "Galician" who had joined the cult that summer.

Cazakoff, his hair matted on his forehead, lips trembling, telephoned the mounted police at Kamsack.

It was an hour before the red-coated Mounties came on their horses. They ordered the naked women and children to their villages; they loaded the naked men into community wagons in which they were hauled to Verigin, where they were held temporarily in a stable. Two days later, taken to Regina, they were sentenced to imprisonment in Regina jail.

Alex Makasaeff never forgave Cazakoff for allowing the brothers to be flogged at the fire. A year or so afterwards, just before Christmas, Peter Holoboff, out of jail, died in the village of Spasivka. Alex Makasaeff with eleven other Sons of Freedom wrapped the body in a blanket and put it into a sleigh. Singing mournful psalms, they pulled it through the snow over the five miles to the brick community office in Verigin. Alex led the sons into Cazakoff's office, where they warmed themselves at the stove but said nothing about what was in the sleigh, nor why they had come.

Eventually Cazakoff's curiosity overcame him.

"What have you in the sleigh?"

"Oh, dear brother," said Makasaeff in dulcet tones, "it is a present for you. A frozen fish for you for Christmas. We know you are very fond of fish."

"But do not look now," said another, as Cazakoff appeared to be going to the door. "You will only embarrass us as we do not wish to be thanked for our generosity."

"Good health to you, brother in Christ," said Makasaeff as they left.

Michael Cazakoff went out to the sleigh, and raising the blanket, saw a pair of feet. Lifting it at the other end, he saw Peter Holoboff's corpse grinning at him, as if he, Holoboff, enjoyed this grim joke.

Among other annoyances to Peter Verigin were the two hundred "bad Dukhobors" from Elizavetpolsk province, Caucasia, who emigrated on their own to Canada in 1911, and had taken individual homesteads in Langham and Asquith districts, not far from the growing prairie city of Saskatoon. Composed entirely of "heretics" and their descendants, who at the death of Lukeria Kalmikova had refused to follow Peter, these settlers insisted on

visiting and contaminating the "good Dukhobors" of Saskatchewan.

"Independents" in the North Saskatchewan River Colony were abandoning village life and moving on their quarter sections, where families lived unto themselves "like the Canadian farmers." Also in 1911, the Canadian Northern Railway extended its branch line from Prince Albert toward Battleford, cutting through the heart of the settlement and further opening the way to Anglo-Saxon civilization. On this new railway the town of Blaine Lake sprang up, to become the commercial center for the Independent Dukhobors. Peter's Saskatchewan "empire" seemed to be falling apart.

And from the Wet Mountains of Caucasia, came word that his son, Peter Petrovich Verigin, had become the semidivine ruler of the Dukhobors whose fathers and mothers had refused to follow him at the death of Lukerial In Constantinople, a minister of the Ottoman government was considering the feasibility of inviting the Community Dukhobors of Canada to Turkey, where they would introduce agricultural methods superior to those of the Turkish peasantry.

In Saskatoon, seventeen-year-old Peter Makaroff entered the new University of Saskatchewan and was thus the first Dukhobor to set foot inside a university since the sect's inception in Muskovy, some two hundred and fifty years before. For Makaroff and other young Dukhobors who discovered for themselves the genius of Leo Tolstoy, "Grandfather Leo Nikolaivich" became more than a legendary leader of a group of lesser Christians. Tolstoy's books, now absorbed firsthand by eager minds, impelled individual search for the answer to the everpresent question, "*Stoi delats?*"—"What to do?"—or how to live a life. His convincing conclusions for non-violence as the true basis of man's eventual brotherhood, his relentless driving toward ultimates, his earthy novels and constant admission of his own fallibility—these, and less tangible things, wedded men like Makaroff to Tolstoy. In 1910 Tolstoy left his family and manor house. He went "out into the world" to "free" his soul. Eighty-two, still questing, probing the enigma of life and death to his last days, he died at a wayside railway station.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

ROYAL COMMISSION

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood's financial position continued to improve. Frugality in village kitchens was part of Peter's plan to free his colonies from indebtedness to loan and land companies. Sugar, tea, and even milk were discouraged as luxuries. Anything more than the roughest of clothing was frowned upon as extravagance. Petushka himself set the fashion for men by wearing a frayed straw hat, cotton shirt and trousers; he laced his leather shoes with yellow binder twine.

His most enduring consort, Anastasia Holubeova, grown stouter with her twenty-five years, wore a dress of cotton almost covering her stockingless legs and a pair of sturdy shoes. Her one feminine indulgence was a silk shawl knotted beneath her chin; the headdress without which no self-respecting Community woman could go as far as the woodpile.

Peter drove about his colonies in an open buggy pulled by one horse. His black upholstered carriage, which would have done credit to Spanish royalty, was left behind in the Community warehouse at Verigin, Saskatchewan.

While the industry of the Dukhobors continued to command the admiration of the non-Dukhobor population, they protested to the Provincial government that the Dukhobors should be made to obey the laws, send their children to school, and register their births, marriages and deaths.

The Dukhobors, in turn, sent petitions of protest to the British Columbia government, on behalf of "our brothers, imprisoned only because they did not report the dead body of their relation."

Protestations from Dukhobors and non-Dukhobors caused the British Columbia government to appoint the "Royal Commission on Doukhobors of 1912." On August 24, William Blakemore, chosen by the Provincial government to be commissioner, took the oath of office. Thus, "William Blakemore, of the City of Victoria, became empowered by GEORGE THE FIFTH, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the

Faith, Emperor of India, in the matter of the 'Public Enquiries Act.' " He was vested with authority "to inquire into the organization, habits, customs, and practices of the Doukhobor Community at Grand Forks, Brilliant, and elsewhere in the Province. . . ."

Equipped with this governmental authority and an expense account, William Blakemore, Wolverhampton Englishman and mining engineer, who had been editor of a weekly paper in Nelson in 1905, set out to fulfill his commission.

Peter Verigin provided the faithful with answers to any questions which might be asked them by the commissioner. With sly satisfaction he went to the Nelson Court House to give testimony in response to the commissioner's general invitation. Straw hat in hand and bowing politely, Peter had ample opportunity to indulge in the Dukhobor art of ambiguous argument. The affable Mr. Blakemore, who later acknowledged "the great readiness with which the Dukhobors and their leaders gave every information desired," was impressed with their truthfulness.

To enable him to arrive at conclusions concerning the antipathy of the Dukhobors to the schools and Vital Statistics Act of British Columbia, he sought the cause of the Dukhobor's antipathy to governments in that part of the Northwest Territories which had become Saskatchewan in 1905. Peter Verigin was only too pleased to discuss Saskatchewan, for it gave him opportunity to divert the commissioner's attention from schools and education to how land in Saskatchewan had been taken away from them by the government. Peter led the commissioner to believe that the Dukhobors were not made conversant with the laws of Canada before or at their arrival in Canada; and, furthermore, that all that was originally required of them in Canada was that they should pay \$10 for each one hundred and sixty acres of homestead land granted to them.

"I warned the government," Peter answered Commissioner Blakemore, "that the people [the Dukhobors] would not be subject to the British government, and they [the government] should know that. They said [the government], 'That is all right; you will pay \$10 for each homestead and you will be given the land.' The Dukhobors positively told them [the government] that they wanted to remain farmers, not to be subjects of the British Government. . . ."

"Now, I want to know who you gave that warning to?" Blakemore asked.

"Mr. Obed Smith," Peter replied, "the commissioner at Winnipeg. And then I was in Ottawa several times and saw the minister and spoke to him about it."

"What minister?" asked Blakemore.

"The minister of the interior, Mr. Sifton," said Verigin.

"Mr. Verigin told Mr. Obed Smith, the immigration commissioner, and the Honorable Mr. Sifton, the minister of the interior, that the condition of the Dukhobors settling in this country was that they would remain foreigners?" Blakemore asked.

"No, farmers," said Verigin.

"And would not become British subjects?" asked Blakemore.

"Yes, sir."

"Was this done by word of mouth or in writing?"

"By word of mouth."

"Was any such statement ever put in writing afterwards?"

"No, never. They [the Dukhobors] paid \$20,000; they made such arrangements with the government, and they paid \$20,000 cash and they [the government] left them [the Dukhobors] there. They [the Dukhobors] made \$20,000 on the railways and paid that to the government," said Verigin. Verigin went on. On and on. More about how the Dukhobors were given to understand they need not become citizens, need not make individual entries for their homesteads. About how surprised he was when he, while in Russia during the winter of 1906-07, received letters from the Dukhobors in Canada that the government was taking their land away from them. "I did not believe the letters I received from the Dukhobors, when I was on such good terms with the government," he said.

On September 12, Blakemore, with his stenographer and photographer and an escort of singing Dukhobors, crossed the blue-green waters of the Columbia River on the Community's cable ferry. He saw the neat Community buildings, the warehouse, the outdoor baking ovens with great loaves of bread more than twelve inches in thickness, and the eight-room hospital complete with dispensary.

"Yes, our hospital is closed," said John Sherbinin, "our people are so healthy that there was no one for the hospital."

Outside, the September sun scintillating on the emerald river and lighting up the towering green hills, a fine vegetarian meal was served on a sparkling white tablecloth. Borsh soup, perashki, and watermelons grown almost from the very ground where the table and benches stood.

John Sherbinin took the honored guests through well-kept orchards. They went in a democrat pulled by the best team in the colony, saw the sawmills, the inviting cleanliness inside the communal houses, the expanding irrigation system and the site for the grain elevator and grist mill. The brothers on the prairies wished to send wheat here, while the brothers in British Columbia wished to send fruit to Saskatchewan, Sherbinin explained.

Back at the community meetinghouse, about 1,000 men, women and children were assembled in ceremonial fashion. Then Gregori Verigin and some of the older men came forward, hats in hands, bowing a greeting to the commissioner. It was all very dignified and impressive. Gregori spoke a welcome in Russian, John Sherbinin interpreting.

"The brothers and sisters are very pleased that Commissioner Blakemore is here to visit them." They were sure now that there would be no more misunderstandings. Praise God. It was unfortunate that there had been some trouble, but in this imperfect world there were always human beings who were enemies of Christ and the peaceful life. Through Sherbinin, Blakemore thanked the people for their hospitality, and praised their industry. He, too, was glad of this opportunity to promote mutual understanding between the Dukhobors and the other people of British Columbia all of whom looked to Christ as their leader.

The rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed children gathered in a group of their own, girls on the left and boys on the right; they sang a hymn which touched the heart of the commissioner. A fair-haired lad, cap in hand and bowing, approached him. The boy wished to say he had been to school. Might he tell the commissioner about it?

"I would be very pleased," Blakemore said, patting the boy's head.

"Yes," said young Maslaff, "I went to the government school with the other boys, and we thought it was very nice. For two months we went. We loved our teacher, she was very kind to us in the Spirit of Christ. Praise God. And we were sorry when she went away and the school was closed."

Blakemore's face beamed at the boy and at the other children who stood politely by.

"But we did not wish to go to school again, because our teacher had been sent to us by the same government who put our people in prison."

Maslaff bowed. Blakemore coughed almost inaudibly. He said that the government did not want to put anyone in prison, but

the parents had broken the law by not sending their boys and girls to school. "How could it be helped?" he asked the boy.

"It was very sad for us," said the boy, "when we loved our teacher so much."

Blakemore said he would explain how it was that the men had been put in jail. Someone said it was very important that everyone should hear these things and to wait a few minutes, as there were some men and women not present who should be listening.

When all was in readiness for the commissioner's address, the old folk had sent the boys and girls away, because it was not good for children to have too much excitement on one day.

So the commissioner spoke to the men and women, who seemed to listen to John Sherbinin's translation with great attention. The commissioner spoke of the benefits of education in public schools. The government did not wish to teach anything contrary to the Dukhobor religion. It wished in every way to meet the wishes of the community, even to teach Russian during part of the day. He explained the necessity for registration of births, deaths and marriages, and that there was no connection between this and registering the men for army service.

At the close of his address, John Konkin and Timothy Samaroden related how they had been harshly treated by the Russian government and banished from Caucasia because their religion would not allow them to comply with the registration laws. They wished to work on the land and live peacefully in British Columbia, just as they had tried to do in Caucasia.

The sun was sinking behind the western rim of the mountains. After a further exchange of courtesies the Dukhobors presented Blakemore with a written account of the day. This report they said, was to show their desire to be of service to the commissioner and the government, even as *sekreter*.

Thanking them, Blakemore glanced at the document, written in English. It began: "The Dukhobor inquiry commissioner, with his secretary and photographer and others who accompanied him yesterday on a visit to the Dukhobor settlements on the banks of the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers between Kinnaird and Brilliant, spent a day of unique and varied interest." After reviewing the day's activities, the report ended with a reference to the "harmonious" relations between the commissioner and the Dukhobors, and how he and his party were impressed with their hospitality and the cleanliness and simplicity of their dwellings. It was explained that Peter Verigin had not been present, because he

wished the people to speak for themselves, and on this occasion he had stayed away because he did not wish to influence what they might say to the commissioner.

The commission went on with its sittings, collecting voluminous oral testimony and letters. The commissioner sent a questionnaire to Beulah Clarke, the teacher who taught school in Brilliant the several months until all of the forty-eight Dukhobor children had stopped attending.

Commissioner: 3. Q.—Did the food agree with you, or did you suffer in any respect, especially from dyspepsia or any stomach trouble?

Teacher: A.—The food agreed with me all right. I suffered neither from dyspepsia nor stomach trouble. The lack of variety was a bit hard.

Commissioner: 10. Q.—Had you any personal acquaintance with Peter Verigin, Mr. John Sherbinin, Mr. John Konkin, Mr. George Verigin? If so, will you please state fully your personal impressions of each, especially as regards to their character, their sincerity and honesty of purpose?

Teacher: A.—I did not get to know Mr. Peter Verigin very well. He called at the school one morning and seemed interested in the work. He told me that his people would like to have me stay with them as long as I felt I could. He asked me to teach the children some English songs. I had no dealings with him. He was always very pleasant when I met him, either bowing or shaking hands. Once he remarked to someone standing there, that he would like to talk to me if he could. I met Mr. John Sherbinin a number of times and I consider him a man of strong character, great sincerity and honesty of purpose. I do not know whether I know Mr. John Konkin or not. His name is not familiar. If I knew his office, I could tell better. I had no acquaintance with Mr. George Verigin.

Most of the letters and petitions to Commissioner Blakemore were signed by Dukhobors other than Peter Verigin. Several of these, for some reason unrevealed, stated that the Dukhobors originated from the three Hebrew prophets, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

"By tradition of our forefathers the beginning of our Dukhobors originate from the three Israel adolescents, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, whom the wicked Assyrian King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, threw into the burning fiery furnace," wrote Simeon Verishagan on behalf of "The Christian

Community of the Universal Brotherhood of the Dukhobors in Canada."

"In Quebec the Minister of Canada, Mr. Sifton, met us at the railway station and complimented all with favor, and said: 'Glory to God that you come out of Russia as from Egypt, where you and your forefathers terribly tormented now come to a country of liberty. Here you can rest and live your own faith as you wish. All that will be required from you is that you pay \$10 for homesteads, and \$2 for road taxes.'"

Another letter from the faithful declared that they had all descended from Ananias. This, to the commissioner, must have been an incongruous statement, when throughout his report he stressed the truthfulness and frankness of the Dukhobors; qualities that the Holy Bible does not attribute to Ananias.

We are Israel posterity from the Adolescents—Ananias, Azer, and Missel, whom King Nesser never could consign to the firestone. And the followers of Jesus Christ Eternal Glory of King and Lord Our Savior of all the Earth. Glory to God.

The Dukhobors Community of Brilliant, British Columbia.

Power of Attorney's are:

CEAMUR BECUNBELURC BEPENGARNR

ANAEAMACUR MEPEMEVUMEB

UBAN EBC KON-KUN

FLAGBUNA X CEMENEBA BEUKUNA

(NEYANAYUAL)

A probable explanation of the mysterious signatures at the end of this and other epistles reproduced in Blakemore's official report is that the Dukhobors signed their names in Russian. Mr. Blakemore in compiling his report did not have the names translated, and resorted to the ingenious method of using all the English equivalents of Russian characters and then substituting. The result was the unconscious invention of a new language unintelligible to English, Russian, or any other readers.

The interminable questions and answers, letters, and petitions which eventually found their way into William Blakemore's "Report of Royal Commission on Dukhobors," constitute a book. Why Commissioner Blakemore did not include in his report testimony of Aylmer Maude, who negotiated, on behalf of the Dukhobors at their request, the original arrangements with the Canadian government, the commissioner did not state in his report. Aylmer Maude made the two official Dukhobor delegates to Canada, in

1898, conversant with the laws. Vladimir Tchertkov and Count Leo Tolstoy were aware of the laws, homestead and otherwise, in Canada. Maude, had he been asked for it, had that evidence. Why Commissioner Blakemore did not include in his report testimony from Clifford Sifton and other government officials—about whom he accepted testimony from Peter Verigin—is not stated in his report which resulted from four months' continuous sittings of the commission in British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

Leopold Sulerjitski, Prince Vladimir Hilkov, Herbert Archer, and others who spoke both English and Russian, and who, in the course of living among the Dukhobors in Canada, had explained to them the laws of Canada—no testimony from these men was included in Blakemore's report. Nowhere in it was mention made of Peter Verigin's declared intention, soon after his arrival in Canada, to have the Dukhobors obey Canadian laws.

Were these and other omissions due to Blakemore's gullibility in the face of Dukhobor testimony, or inability to conduct an investigation? Or that the Conservative government of British Columbia desired to show that the Liberal governments of Canada and Saskatchewan had been negligent in acquainting the Dukhobors with the laws of the country, or that the appointment of the Royal Commission on Dukhobors was only another commission to placate the public and at the same time provide a party supporter with a temporary position? Answers to these questions were not given by Mr. Blakemore in the compilation of his report.

In any event, Peter Verigin and his followers entertained William Blakemore throughout four months, at the conclusion of which the commissioner shook what little confidence they may have had in governments, by recommending, in effect, that the Dukhobors abandon their traditional pacifism and become soldiers in the army when called upon: "That it is in the best interests of the country that the order in council granting exemption from military service be cancelled."

The major result of the Royal Commission's Report on Dukhobors was that Verigin was able to show the faithful that "the government wishes to break yet another agreement with you by forcing you to serve as soldiers in a war."

Thus was the allegiance of the faithful to Peter Verigin increased, and sympathy for Canadian institutions still further alienated. All of which could have been accomplished without spending many thousands of dollars on a commission launched with the purport of solving the Dukhobor problem.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

WAR MADNESS

"PRAVDA, IT IS TRUE the Canadian government will send soldiers from Canada to help the Englishmen fight against Germans in France," said Peter Vasilivich Verigin to an anxious Community meeting in Brilliant, August, 1914.

"But the government will not take our men to be soldiers in an army?" a stout wife squeezed her hands in her apron.

"I have told them they must not take the Christians of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood," said Petushka. "The Canadian government must let our men live peacefully in the Christian way, on the land, with their wives and families, here in British Columbia, and also in Saskatchewan province. Slava Bohu. But for the unchristian brothers who have deserted us, those calling themselves Independents, for them I can promise nothing. They are not Dukhobors. If the government takes them away across the ocean and makes them fight in an army, I will feel sorry for them in the Spirit of Christ, but I will not be able to stop the government, because they are not Dukhobors."

In this way did Peter reassure the faithful and hint at the dire fate for the Independents. Though enlistment in the Canadian Expeditionary Force was on a voluntary basis during the first years of the European War of 1914-18, his continued pronouncements had the effect of strengthening allegiance to him within the Community and frightening Independents so that they returned to the fold.

That military conscription might become law in Canada, as in Great Britain, would have driven still more Independents back to the communal fold had it not been that wartime prices for agricultural products were an inducement to reap profits independently; though there were some Independents who remained independent on principle, being influenced neither by fear of conscription nor greed for profit.

Rising prices for railway ties, telephone poles and dressed lumber led Verigin's British Columbia colonies further into the lumbering industry. Community Dukhobors, with John Sherbinin in charge, pushed north from Brilliant into the timber stands of the

Slocan River valley; and soon, logs from Porto Rico forest, eighteen miles south of Nelson, were being fed into Community saw mills.

Wartime wages were tempting younger Dukhobors to leave the Community. With Peter's sanction, John Sherbinin introduced the novel idea of paying the men in logging camps and saw mills with cheques, and when workers held out a few dollars of their wages from the Community treasury, this laxity was expediently overlooked.

On April 25, 1917, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited was incorporated under a Dominion charter, with a capitalization of \$1,000,000. Peter Verigin issued the million shares to himself and thirteen Dukhobor directors, on whom he could rely not to oppose him in his wildest dreams of expansion. Total assets of the company were about three times that of the capitalization.

While lumbering and fruit farming flourished on the mountainsides and in the valleys of British Columbia, money flowed into the communal treasury from the wheat harvests in Saskatchewan. In August, 1917, Number One Northern Wheat averaged \$2.40 a bushel at Fort William.

Outside the Community, wages in harvest fields that fall were from \$6 to \$9 for the customary fourteen-hour day, and a number of younger Dukhobors might have been enticed from the Community, if military conscription had not been introduced that autumn.

Peter Verigin continued to use the threat of military conscription as a lever with which to pry more Independents into his communal fold, and though this was effective with a few, the majority now declined his protection as of doubtful value. He assured government officials, civil and military, that the Independents were not Dukhobors, and that they were therefore not entitled to exemption from military service on religious grounds.

In June of 1918, the Canadian government, with a view to accelerating production of everything that would help to win "the war to end war," passed an act requiring every man and woman residing in Canada of sixteen years of age or more, to register and carry with them an official registration card. The applicant for a registration card was required to answer questions like, "Can you drive a tractor? Can you hitch up a team of horses?" The card became a "passport" after the Russian style, in that without it "persons may not lawfully purchase transportation

tickets and may be denied board and lodging in hotels . . . cannot be lawfully employed . . . subject to fine and imprisonment."

Four years of war in France had aroused patriotic Canadians against the exemption from military service enjoyed by Dukhobors and Mennonites "who stay at home and get rich while good Anglo-Saxon young men shed their blood on Flanders fields for King and Country."

More especially did this feeling run high against the Independent Dukhobors, some of whom had built new houses and barns, bought automobiles, threshing outfits, and additional quarter sections of land. Talk was that the Independent young men of military age would soon be conscripted into the army and sent to France.

Rumors of conscription so disturbed the Independents that they formed a society of their own and issued cards to their members:

"This is to certify that is a member of the Society of Independent Dukhobors, otherwise known as Dukhobors, and as such is specifically exempted from the effect of the Military Service Act of 1917."

Then, members of Parliament reassured the Independents, and it was arranged that Military District Number 12 at Regina would officially stamp the membership cards, when presented and duly signed by two officials of the new society.

Peter P. Vorobieff, of Kamsack, Saskatchewan, was appointed president, and Peter G. Makaroff, of Saskatchewan, was secretary. Peter Makaroff, just out of university, was practicing law in Saskatoon, the prairie city wherein real-estate dealers and the Board of Trade boasted of the "Hub City" growing every day. In university Peter had played inside left on the rugby team, had made a showing at hockey and discus throwing, running, broad and high jumping, and one year was university athletic champion. Nevertheless, he was a confirmed pacifist. With characteristic stubbornness he resisted the taunts of campus flag wavers. In vigorous English he wrote to Richard Bedford Bennett, chairman of the Canada Registration Board, to Prime Minister Borden, and to other authorities, pointing out that Independent Dukhobors were Dukhobors, entitled to exemption from military conscription.

While the replies to Makaroff's letters were encouraging, rumors persisted in the Blaine Lake district, once the North Saskatchewan River Colony, that military police would take the young men away to the army that fall. About the middle of August, when the wheat crop was almost ready for the binders, an overzealous Royal North

West Mounted Policeman, Sergeant John Wilson, arrested some Independent Dukhobors in Blaine Lake. Word of the arrests spread through the district. Early in the morning of August 17, Independent Dukhobors converged at Nikito Popoff's farm to hold a meeting and decide what to do. By noon, 1,000 men, women and children, had arrived in buggies, democrats, wagons and six automobiles. A jug of water, a bowl of salt and a loaf of bread stood on the white-clothed ceremonial table. Women assembled on the left, men on the right, and a psalm telling of the iniquity of war replaced the soft rustle of the breeze in a near-by field of oats.

After the opening ceremony there were shouts of, "Turn the horses and cattle into the crops if they will take our men!" "Burn the binders! Burn the automobiles and the machinery. Burn everything that is part of civilization and war."

Everyone had brought food to the meeting, but many were too excited to eat. There was salmon on large plates, and nine-year-old John Popoff, Nikito's son, tasted fish for the first time in his life. He liked it, then felt God would never forgive him; but when Grandfather Mathew wasn't watching, he ate more.

Nikito Popoff had gone in his MacLaughlin Buick fifty miles south to Saskatoon to bring Peter Makaroff to the meeting.

Nikito was almost breathless when he rushed into Makaroff's office. "Peter! The police are arresting our young men, taking them for the army."

"They can't do that," said Makaroff, "I have letters from the authorities saying that we Independent Dukhobors are exempt from the army."

"But they are taking them! It is terrible! At the meeting on my farm, hundreds are talking about burning everything!"

Makaroff, with his leather brief case of letters, drove toward Blaine Lake as fast as Nikito dared put the Buick over the dirt road.

In the meantime, at the meeting on the Popoff farm, police came in an automobile. There was confusion for a few minutes. Women wailed, old men shouted warnings, children whimpered and clung to their parents. Peter Esakin, of military age, shut himself up in the Popoff clothes closet. Four young men ran to the oat field, crawling into the center of it on their hands and knees. Afterwards they were referred to as *ziatsi*, "rabbits." Policemen took Nik Makaroff, Alex Verashagin and several others considered leaders among the Independents.

The "rabbits" came out of the oat field; Esakin emerged from the clothes closet looking very sheepish. The meeting continued to discuss burning the machinery, turning the livestock into the standing grain, going en masse to the prison in Blaine Lake. It was decided that they should wait for Nikito and Peter Makaroff. In the meantime, no one would harvest anything until "our young men are returned to us."

Nikito's car had barely stopped in front of the frame lockup in Blaine Lake town, when Sergeant Wilson asked, "Why aren't you in the army, Makaroff?"

"I'm exempt."

"You are like hell exempt," replied Wilson. "Where's your certificate?"

"This is it," said Makaroff handing the sergeant a Society of Independent Dukhobors' certificate.

"That's no damn good. I arrest you in the name of the King."

"I submit to arrest, but you'll find out you're wrong."

Sergeant Wilson grabbed Makaroff's brief case.

"I can't give that up," said Makaroff. "The documents proving exemption for all of us are in there."

"You can give it up," Wilson snatched the case. "Come on with me, I'll show you where you can cool off."

It was a frame lockup with one iron-barred cell and guardroom about the size of a granary. Makaroff was the only one in the cell, the rest of the arrested Dukhobors being in the guardroom. He could hear them talking in Russian; not to fight, treat even the guards politely.

In the cell was a small outside window. Someone was there.

"Peter, it is I, Ivan."

"Bring me a sheet of paper, to write on," Makaroff said.

Then he wrote a message to the Honorable Arthur Meighen, minister of the interior, telling of the arrests in face of the government's promise of exemption.

Ivan took the note and gave it to Nikito Popoff who telegraphed the message to Ottawa.

Makaroff had supper in his cell, and afterwards the "trial" of some thirty Dukhobors began in the guardroom.

Sergeant Wilson prosecuted while a justice of the peace, without hearing any evidence, sentenced the men to an imprisonment of a few weeks, or to fines. Several offered to pay the fines, but the rest refused. When it came Makaroff's turn he insisted on a "real trial," and demanded the return of his brief case. But the justice

of the peace sentenced him to two months' imprisonment, because he was a single man. "When you come out of prison, you will be turned over to the military authorities for further disposition," added Wilson.

The other Dukhobors, being married men with the exception of Mike Zarchekoff, were told that they might return to their farms and they would be allowed time in which to pay their fines. "We will stay until you let our brother Peter Makaroff out of prison," said Verashagin.

Independent Dukhobor messengers had gone to Yorkton, Kamsack and Langham districts to arouse the Independents there. They came in automobiles, several hundred of them, and with the men and women from Blaine Lake district the little town was full of Dukhobors singing psalms and reciting prayers, threatening to turn their livestock into the crops, and "follow the prisoners wherever their guards will take them."

Blaine Lake merchants, whose thriving wartime business was mainly with Independent Dukhobors, prevailed on Sergeant Wilson to let Makaroff and Zarchekoff go free. "Get all these people back to their farms and let them put their binders into the crop before any damage is done," urged a nervous implement dealer.

So the caravan of automobiles, trucks and horse-drawn vehicles moved out of Blaine Lake to Nikito Popoff's farm. There at another meeting, Makaroff advised everyone to return to their own farms and begin harvesting. He would go to Ottawa with several other delegates, including Vasili Verashagin and Peter Shukin.

In Ottawa, it seemed that the arrests at Blaine Lake had been a mistake of the local authorities. The delegation was assured by the department of militia that the exemption cards of the Society of Independent Dukhobors would be recognized by the military police, and this was confirmed in a telegram to the commanding officer, Military District No. 12, Regina.

Peter Verigin had failed in his efforts to have the Independents conscripted, and as a result there were a number of families in British Columbia and Saskatchewan who deserted the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited, now feeling it a safe thing to do.

As a gesture of good will, Verigin contributed a shipment of "K. C. Brand" jam as a gift to the troops in France. He took the opportunity to point out that the Christians could not fight in a war, but Christ said that no man should go hungry.

The Russian Revolution in 1917 had aroused the interest of the

Dukhobors. Independents had favored Kerenski's short-lived government, but several of the very young men admired Lenin and Trotsky; while Community people viewed one government as bad as another.

Vladimir Bonch-Bruivich, the Russian revolutionary, who had left Caucasia with the Dukhobor migration, and who later had published *Verigin's Letters*, was now friend and confidant of Lenin in Moscow.

Not many more than twelve Dukhobors had enlisted voluntarily with the C. E. F. in France, and most of them had changed their names so as not to disgrace their parents.

Boris Sachatoff, less and less fascinated by the Sons of Freedom, turned to Marx and Lenin for inspiration. Count Kapneist had left for St. Petersburg when Imperial Russia entered the war. Sad-eyed Maria Alexandrovna Afanaseva who had "come to Canada to die," started back to Russia, but was drowned when the *Empress of Ireland*, sank in the St. Lawrence River.

On February 4, 1920, Chief Justice Sir Frederick Haultain, in King's Bench Court, Saskatoon, sentenced Sergeant Wilson, of the Royal North West Mounted Police, to hang by the neck until dead. The jury had found him guilty of murder. On or about September 28, 1919, he had blown his wife's head off with a shotgun, and secreted her body beneath a culvert on a road. Then, on the day after the murder, he had married Jessie Patterson, of Blaine Lake, in Knox Church, Saskatoon, the Reverend C. Wylie Clarke officiating. Wilson was hanged at Prince Albert, April 23, 1920.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

SLY POLICIES

THE YEARLY MEETING of the Religious Society of Friends for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and parts of Maryland was shocked, in 1922, by startling news of Peter Verigin's plan for getting rid of children and old people among the Dukhobors. "This is so shocking that some of us cannot believe it . . . if half what is printed (in the newspapers) is true," a Quaker wrote Makaroff.

Peter Makaroff replied that he thought it unlikely Peter Verigin intended to drown the children and aged, but that it was probable he was attempting to embarrass the government with publicity in the newspapers, because he did not wish to pay school taxes.

No children nor old folk were drowned, but a government schoolhouse burned, mysteriously, in November of 1923. This was the first of a series of schoolhouse burnings in Dukhobor districts of British Columbia and Saskatchewan. In the spring of 1924, fire "of unknown origin" consumed three government schools and Peter Verigin's house at Brilliant.

Verigin complained to Premier John Oliver of British Columbia, that the police were unable to catch the criminals who set fire to the schools, and that the Dukhobors had no schools to attend, as he, Verigin, wished them to do.

The Quakers, never completely tiring of regenerating the Dukhobors, responded to an invitation to aid a Dukhobor youth movement which had been inaugurated a year or two earlier near Buchanan, Saskatchewan. In July 1924, two men came from the United States, one was the president of Kansas University, and the other, a Quaker from Philadelphia. "Both these men were Christians of outstanding caliber. It was Christ they preached, no matter what specific problem they discussed," said the Rev. G. G. Heffelfinger, minister of the United Church at Buchanan, who took part in the movement.

While the youth movement lasted, Mike Ostoforoff sang in the church choir and was Heffelfinger's "right-hand man in the boys' work." Then Mike went to Chicago and took an osteopathic course.

In the province of Alberta, Verigin had purchased a few thousand acres of wheat land near Cowley and Lundbreck. Here on the rolling prairie lived Anastasia Holubeova and some five hundred members of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited.

There were rumors that the faithful might migrate to Mexico, but nothing came of them. A few hundred Independents had moved on their own to Oregon and Southern California.

In August, 1924, John Sherbinin, expert lumberman, left the Community and became an Independent. There were others who left and bought fruit land of their own. It seemed as if disintegration was again besetting Verigin's little nation within a nation.

The Sons of Freedom increased in numbers in British Columbia, most of them believing in Verigin as their divine leader, a few emphatic that the Spirit of Christ had left him. In Grand Forks was a bearded son who proclaimed himself "Paul, Tsar of Earth," wore a crown of oranges on his head and said that he had visited heaven.

While Peter Vasilivich Verigin could welcome no "tsar" who might threaten his own dominion over the faithful, he was not unwilling to use fanatics as scapegoats for his opposition to taxes, and schools.

So plastic was the creed of the Sons of Freedom and its varied hallucinations and factions, and so foreign was the mental-emotional process of the sectarian muzhik to the Anglo-Saxon mind, that Peter was pleased to let events take their course, no matter how fantastic, supreme in his confidence that he would be able to turn whatever transpired, including the burning of buildings, to his own advantage.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

RAILWAY EXPLOSION

ON THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER 28, 1924, at Brilliant station, a little group of the faithful saw Peter Vasilivich Verigin board the Canadian Pacific's Kootenay Express, westbound through the mountains. With him was Mary Strelieva, one of his maids. They found a seat about the middle of the day coach. A Dukhobor man who had carried Petushka's suitcase into the train and put it carefully under his seat, bowed and left. Another Dukhobor, traveling to one of the settlements farther west, sat at a respectful distance from the leader.

"That is Peter Verigin, the Dukhobor leader," John A. Mackie, member of the legislative assembly of British Columbia, remarked to a fellow traveler.

It was Harry Bishop, hockey player and commercial traveler for Swift Canadian Company, who remarked later that he had often seen Verigin on this train. The Dukhobor chief always remained aloof, knew little English and spoke less. But his enigmatic presence invariably caused curious glances in his direction. Even the imperturbable eyes of several Hindus on the coach and the bland face of a Chinaman showed interest in this peasant lord.

From the engine came two short blasts; the train moved through the night-shrouded fruit orchards; lights twinkled from a settlement across the Columbia River, while on the north side of the right of way, dark forested hills towered abruptly.

When Conductor Turner came through to collect tickets, Peter Verigin, saying not a word, handed him two for Castlegar, the next station, only two miles west. A few minutes later the trainman called, "Castlegar, Castlegar next," nodding to Verigin. But when the Kootenay Express steamed out of Castlegar, Peter Verigin and his maid still occupied their seat, and from the Conductor, Verigin purchased two cash fares to Grand Forks a hundred miles away. Nothing unusual happened during the next two hours. At Tunnell, twenty-five miles farther west, three Dukhobor men of the Zibaroff, Kazakoff and Rebin families got on the train and settled themselves in a double seat about six windows behind Peter and Mary. The train wound on through the darkness; it

climbed steadily. At Farron summit, an altitude of 3,976 feet, the pusher engine was uncoupled, and a café car added.

The train left Farron about one o'clock in the morning and, with cast-iron brakeshoes grinding against steel tires, went cautiously down the mountain at twenty miles an hour. Conductor Turner and the trainman walked through the train, but there were no new passengers. The twenty in the day coach were settled down for the night in various positions of rest and exhaustion. Peter Verigin, head bent forward, seemed to be dozing; beside him Mary Strelieva slept, her shawled head on a pillow by the window ledge.

Leaving the day coach, conductor and trainman walked over the shifting, clanging iron plates of the vestibule and into the baggage car. The door slammed shut behind them. They reached the far end of the car, where the conductor said to the baggageman, "We're a little ahead of—"

An explosive roar cut short the sentence which was never finished.

The baggage-car door, through which they had entered a moment before, was hurled off its hinges halfway into the car. Simultaneously, the train stopped with such suddenness that the three men were thrown against the opposite door. Astounded, they walked through the doorless end of the car, to find the vestibule of the day coach blocked with splintered wood. The baggageman ran back into his car, opened a side door and jumped to the ground. The conductor and trainman, glass crunching beneath their feet, pushed their way into the day coach. The air reeked with acrid smoke. The gas lights were out, but from a tongue of blue flame licking up from the floor, about the center of the coach, they saw that almost the entire north side had disappeared. The roof was gone too, cold white stars glinting through a haze of smoke where a few moments before the creamy gas lights had shone. An unnatural, deathlike silence hung over the weird destruction. Jammed into one seat, still intact, they found two men and a woman unconscious. These passengers they lifted one by one through a glassless window, the baggageman outside helping them to the ground. The flame in the center of the coach was spreading. With difficulty they hunted for other passengers, but throughout the main section of the coach they searched in vain. Even the seats in the center had vanished with the side of the car and the roof. At the extreme end, they discovered three men, semiconscious, and dragged them to safety.

Both Engineer Harkness and Fireman Munro had heard the detonation, which had evidently broken the air line thus stopping the train within a space of two car lengths. They looked at one another in a brief moment of amazement. The fireman made sure there was plenty of water in the boiler; the engineer put the locomotive in stationary reverse. Both climbed down from the cab and ran back toward a growing flame, which seemed to be about the middle of the train. They heard Conductor Turner shout:

"There might be someone alive in there!" With that he entered the coach for the second time, stumbled the length of the aisle, still found no one and managed to get out at the other end.

"Where are the rest of them? We only got six out and there were twenty aboard," he gasped.

Passengers came out of the sleeping car next to the wrecked coach, fearfully astonished faces accentuated in the light of the shifting flames. The trainman and the express messenger used a chemical fire extinguisher on the near end of the sleeper. Out in the semidarkness of the right of way the fireman shouted for help. He had found two persons—dead or alive. The conductor disappeared into the gloom. The engineer ran back to his engine; brakes must be temporarily released to pull the burning coach away from the sleeper and isolate it from the baggage car. The undercarriage and wheels of the day coach were not damaged, but the explosion had broken the gaspipe line beneath the floor and set fire to escaping gas, which fired the woodwork.

In the boulder-strewn ditch of the north side and amidst stunted spruce trees now lighted up by the crackling flames of the wooden coach, train crew and passengers from the sleeping car found the rest of the ill-fated passengers. Peter Verigin, blown a hundred feet from the track, a gaping wound in his side, one leg almost severed, was dead. So was Mackie, the member of the legislature, who had been sitting in an adjacent seat. Mary Streliova, clothes half torn from her body, was dying. Hakkim Singh, a Hindu, was battered beyond recovery. At least ten others were seriously wounded. On the south side of the right of way, two hundred feet from the track, was the car roof, which had been hurled in the opposite direction.

"Look! Fire's broken out on the sleeping-car roof!" someone shouted.

The trainman climbed up with a fire extinguisher. On top of the roof he found a man's trouser leg in flames. The remnant

of cloth had evidently been blown there by the force of the explosion, and after smoldering for a while, burst into flames.

When the wounded had been carried inside the sleeping-car and the dead into the baggage car, Conductor Turner, lantern in hand, ran and walked over the ties the two miles back to Farron. There he ordered the pusher engine to the wreck, and telegraphed to Nelson. The train was divided. The pusher engine hooked on to the sleeper of wounded and hurried over the sixty miles of winding railway to Nelson. The stark undercarriage of the ill-fated day coach, all that remained of it, was left on Farron siding. The rest of the Kootenay Express, mail, baggage, and café cars, went on to Grand Forks with the uninjured passengers and the dead. The wounded reached Nelson and the hospital at 5.45 A.M., three victims, including Mary Streliova, having died en route. Bishop, the popular hockey player, who had been sitting across from Verigin, died in Nelson Hospital.

A special train left Nelson early that morning, with doctors and nurses aboard, met the wounded at Castlegar, and went on with railway officials and police to the scene of the wreck. They found debris scattered parallel to the tracks over two hundred feet and picked up shreds of clothing more than three hundred feet away. The finding of a dry battery with part of an alarm clock was reported to D. C. Coleman, vice-president of Western lines at Winnipeg. D. W. "Dynamite" McNabb, inspector of the government bureau of explosives, Vancouver, was among the many who investigated the disaster, which resulted in the death of nine persons. The full force of the explosion seemed to have been close by or under the seat in which Peter Verigin had been sitting. Theories were evolved that "fanatics" had deliberately taken the life of Peter Verigin, had put dynamite, time clock and electric battery in a suitcase under his seat. "Bolshevik agents," suggested someone. A Bolshevik agent killed Verigin because he had opposed Communism among his people? There was the "woman" theory. A woman jealous of his attentions to others had revengefully plotted to blot out his life. Or a young Dukhobor was desperately in love with one of Verigin's "maids"? Suicide? Disillusioned, he had taken his own life in a spectacular fashion which would make suicide appear highly improbable. Accidental? Someone had been carrying dynamite in the coach, and it accidentally exploded. Railway officials had had trouble before with farmers and miners carrying dynamite in passenger coaches.

"Stump ranchers" used dynamite to blast tree stumps from new land; prospectors employed it to shatter rock. Under the Canadian Railways Act, high explosives must be transported in a specially marked freight car. This reasonable protection made freight charges on small quantities prohibitive. Thus, to save expense, individuals had been known to pack dynamite into suitcases and carry it like legitimate baggage, sometimes placing it by a seat other than the one in which they sat, in order, if discovered, to deny ownership. But even sensitive dynamite does not explode of its own accord.

At the inquest in Grand Forks, the coroner's jury reached the conclusion that the victims "came to their death through powerful explosive placed in the coach through ignorance or deliberately."

British Columbia Provincial Police posted reward notices in English, Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish, offering \$2,000 to anyone giving information that would lead to arrest and conviction.

The Canadian Pacific Railway Company issued passes to enable relatives of the dead to care for the bodies. After Verigin's body was released by the coroner, seven hundred Dukhobors chartered a special train to Brilliant, where the faithful in thousands gathered to mourn over the remains of their dead leader; like a collective crying of lost souls, women wailed their eerie lamentations, men sobbed, children whimpered. Amidst the mourning there was gossip that the "government killed Petushka . . . the government put dynamite under his seat; and killed the Member of Parliament too, to make us believe that they did not do it."

There was whispering about "who will be our new leader," and consternation concerning the burial place of Peter Vasilivich. "Where will we bury him when there is no Holy Cemetery?" Eventually, it was decided to dig a grave in the rock at the base of the steep hillside overlooking Brilliant village and the river.

Saskatchewan Dukhobors arrived for the funeral. Sunday, November 2, the faithful in thousands assembled in ceremonial fashion on the steep hillside. Melancholy psalms rose and fell, filling the valley and floating over the dark-blue waters of the Columbia.

For six weeks mourning was mingled with uneasiness throughout all the colonies of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited. Peter Vasilivich had at no time indicated whom he might wish to follow him as ruler. There was a growing feeling that the Spirit of Christ would enter into the body of his

only son, Peter Petrovich Verigin, in Russia. But those opposed to the younger Peter assuming the mantle of Christ, said that no one knew where he was in Russia. And others, who admitted that he might be found in a village near Rostov-on-Don where he had moved with his followers from Caucasia, shook their heads and declared he would not be acceptable because it was true that he had become a Bolshevik, denying God.

"But," said Plotnikoff, "if he is a Bolshevik, I am sure he is only a Bolshevik to fool the Soviet government."

This talk of finding Peter Petrovich Verigin, and bringing him to Canada, was disquieting to John Shukin and Michael Cazakoff. These two mild-eyed and canny businessmen felt their lives might be made miserable should he appear on the scene. To avoid such a calamity, either would have gladly assumed the rulership, but both knew they had neither the force nor color to capture the imagination of the people. Thus Shukin and Cazakoff planned to place Anastasia Holubeova, old Peter's favorite consort, in the hereditary office. Had not a woman, Lukeria Vasilivna, been a good leader before Peter Vasilivich? With stout and passive Anastasia as nominal head, Shukin would continue to manage Community affairs in British Columbia, while Cazakoff would retain his position in Saskatchewan.

Anastasia was easily convinced that her years of intimacy with Peter Vasilivich fitted her to receive the Holy Spirit. Gregori Verigin, Peter's brother, favored her ascension to the throne. The Alberta colony in which Anastasia, Gregori Verigin and several other Verigins resided, was won over to her support.

Some Sons of Freedom wanted Peter Petrovich as the new Christ. Others, as usual, knew not what they wanted; while Paul, self-styled "Tsar of Earth," wore his crown of oranges and agitated one day that his friend "Tsar of Heaven" should be leader, and next day that "we must all be free and live as brothers and sisters having no leader other than God in Heaven."

On December 10, at the traditional six-weeks-after-death ceremony by Peter's grave when his soul was supposed to enter Heaven, 4,000 of the faithful assembled on the hillside. Beneath the singing of psalms and touching of foreheads to the ground, there was an undercurrent of apprehension not unlike that which had prevailed thirty-eight years before by the graveside of Lukeria in the Wet Mountains of Caucasia.

There had been no answer to the cablegrams sent to Peter Petrovich Verigin at Rostov-on-Don, Union of Socialist Soviet Re-

publics. Anastasia's supporters in the Alberta colony let it be known that they would withdraw from the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood if she was not elected to the rulership. An irate woman supporter of Peter Petrovich trampled Paul's crown of oranges in the snow.

Amidst sobs and bickering a several-thousand-dollar mausoleum was erected over Petushka's grave. The final meeting to decide who should be the new ruler was held in the Community Hall of Brilliant village, and it soon became evident that the majority wanted Peter Petrovich Verigin. Only the Alberta colony delegates and a few others favored Anastasia, and when Shukin and Cazakoff saw their defeat, they withdrew their support from Anastasia.

The faithful were perturbed. Possibly the Soviet government was not delivering their messages? Possibly poor Peter Petrovich was in prison, suffering for his Christian beliefs? They would send two delegates to find him. Nikolai Plotnikoff and Vasil Verashagin set out for Russia.

Through the winter, belief increased amongst the faithful that Peter Vasilivich Verigin had been deliberately destroyed by the Canadian government "who killed him as the Roman government killed Christ 2,000 years ago."

John Shukin began writing ambiguous letters to the newspapers, signing himself "formerly private secretary to the late Peter Verigin," and referring to "truth for which the leader of the Dukhobors, Peter Verigin, has sacrificed his life for the sake of the teaching of Jesus Christ."

Amidst the confusion, the faithful seemed united only in opposition to the cruel government that had killed Peter Verigin. They withdrew the few children who had been attending government schools, decided to pay no fines for infraction of the Schools Act, or failure to comply with the Vital Statistics Act, and threatened to discontinue paying taxes. In February, John Elozkoff and Peter Postuken were arrested near Grand Forks for failure to have their children attend school. They chose fourteen days' imprisonment rather than pay the fine. A week after they had been sentenced in Grand Forks, on the night of February 27, the unoccupied schoolhouse, five miles from the town, was burned to the ground.

When on March 1, Premier Oliver of British Columbia came to Grand Forks to visit his son-in-law, the Rev. F. E. Runnalls, minister of the United Church, eight hundred Dukhobors as-

sembled outside the manse, singing hymns for Oliver's edification. From the front porch the premier addressed them, at their request, through an interpreter. He reminded them that certain laws had been enacted for the benefit of all in Canada, and that though people coming from other countries were given the same privileges as Canadians, they also must obey the same laws. "I would have you thoroughly understand that these laws will be enforced," he said.

"But the government's laws killed Peter Verigin," came a voice from the center of the assemblage. "We believe in God's laws."

"You lie!" shouted the premier. "It was not our laws that killed Mr. Verigin. He was killed in spite of our laws, against our laws."

Next day the premier went on to Nelson, the constituency that had elected him as a Liberal member of the legislature. There John Shukin, with a small delegation, approached him.

"We are very sorry, Mr. Premier Oliver, if Dukhobors in Grand Forks insulted you," said Shukin.

"I was not insulted. They spoke civilly, but expressed very peculiar views," said Oliver.

Shukin, still with a pained look on his face, asked that the Premier Oliver speak to the Dukhobors in Brilliant village.

This invitation the premier emphatically declined.

"I have given eight years to the Dukhobor question," he said. "I have given the Dukhobors considerable latitude, thinking that they would eventually come around and live up to the laws like the rest of the people of British Columbia. But instead of improving, the situation has become worse. You have burned eight schools, and today no children are going to school at all. I am going to see that you live up to the law."

Shukin, looking at his feet, bowed and thanked the premier. The others of the delegation bowed, said nothing, and followed Shukin out of the office of the Nelson Board of Trade.

Shukin returned to Brilliant, where he had left a large meeting called to decide the economic policy of the British Columbia colonies for the leaderless year to come. After much discussion, the meeting agreed to do everything possible to reduce the mortgages incurred by Peter Vasilivich in establishing the colonies. Once more, the most able-bodied men would work for wages, bringing their earnings back to the Community fund. Older men, boys and women would work at home in the orchards and mills.

If the crop were good, slava Bohu, thirty boxcars of jam could be shipped from the factory at Brilliant.

It was Shukin's hope that the British Columbia government would forget about schools and education. He wished faithfully to continue Peter Verigin's opposition to schools. But Premier Oliver was determined that the Dukhobor children should attend school in accord with the laws of the province. He was not going to burden the taxpayers by putting the offending parents in jail. Instead he would have them fined in the courts.

April 9, thirty-five Dukhobors were convicted for failure to send their children to school. When these parents refused to pay the fines, distress warrants were issued at Grand Forks authorizing seizure of sufficient property to make up fines totalling \$4,000. Police Inspector W. R. Dunwoody, mounted on a horse, with ten regular constables and one hundred men from the road gangs, set about the seizures.

First they went to the Dukhobor warehouse at Grand Forks, where they seized office equipment, cement, sacks of peas and beans. From a spur track they seized five flatcars of railway ties. In silence Popoff and Kuchin, the local business managers, watched the proceedings. In motor trucks Dunwoody's men drove out to the villages. Word of their coming had preceded them, and they found sacks of wheat hidden under buildings and haystacks. All they could find they brought back to Grand Forks.

Women spat at them, cursing them in Russian for their unchristian stealing "all because we are living in the Spirit of Christ." Men eyed them with ominous quiet, but offered no resistance.

Dukhobors telegraphed to Cazakoff in Saskatchewan, and he, in Yorkton, telegraphed to the authorities in Grand Forks, pleading that the public auction be postponed until his arrival in British Columbia.

Dukhobors in British Columbia telegraphed Premier Oliver, asking that he withdraw the police. The premier replied that if they really wanted the raids to cease, all they had to do was pay their fines and in future send their children to school. Oliver received a letter threatening to blow him up and burn his house. Signed "Dukhobors," it was postmarked Victoria and may have originated from a practical joker taking advantage of the situation.

When Cazakoff arrived in Grand Forks, he did not know what to do. The authorities were determined to sell the chattels

by auction and collect the fines. The Dukhobors were determined not to pay voluntarily, and when Cazakoff suggested they should, they accused him of betraying the memory of Peter Vasilivich. He sweated, took his comb from his suitcoat pocket and flattened his hair down over his forehead.

Businessman that he was, he suggested that they themselves bid at the auction, but they refused to "buy back our own property and in that way let the government collect the fines."

His mouth turned down at the corners, as he watched the auctioneer at work.

"It means ruination." He clutched the edge of his suitcoat and rolled it up to his armpit.

The Dukhobors claimed that \$20,000 worth of their property was auctioned. But the sale brought in only \$3,500. As the total amount sought by the government was \$4,600, it seized cedar poles and railway ties sufficient to make up the total amount of fines and costs.

Then Shukin received a cablegram from Peter Petrovich Verigin in Russia. He was coming to Canada, possibly within three weeks. The faithful heard the news with joy. Shukin and Cazakoff, willing to say almost anything to put an end to these auction sales, persuaded the faithful to send their children to school until the *novi* Petushka would come and advise everybody what to do. Slava Bohu.

Thus did the children begin to dribble back to the frame school-houses, and the authorities unwittingly thought they had found a way to manage the parents.

CHAPTER THIRTY

LEWD PARABLES

MONTHS OF WAITING followed, and still Peter Petrovich Verigin did not come. Plotnikoff and Verashagin, the *delegatsi*, returned from Russia without him, bringing with them his mother Dunia Verigina, whom old Peter had divorced in Caucasia thirty-nine years ago.

Wizened, numbly resigned, she had little to say at meetings where the most credulous received her as "Mother of Christ" and called her Babushka.

The delegates assured everyone that Peter Petrovich would come soon.

"Petushka wishes to be with us now," Plotnikoff told the Brilliant meeting. "He loves you, loves us all. But now he is very busy helping the brothers and sisters who moved from Caucasia to good land by the River Don. He would be very sorry to leave there until he has done everything."

"Da," Verashagin echoed in his address, "so Petushka sent us his dear mother to be with us in the Spirit of Christ until he comes. Slava Bohu."

During winter evenings, to chosen listeners, Plotnikoff had strange tales to relate. Petushka had helped overthrow the Tsar's government, Petushka had helped Josef Stalin rob the express train so there would be gold for the revolution, gold for the peasants. But Petushka was not a Bolshevik. He had not murdered one man. Everything he did was in the Spirit of Christ.

Plotnikoff's face would become worried momentarily, and he would squeeze his coat with uneasy hands when, on a few occasions, he admitted that Peter drank vodka and smoked cigarettes sometimes. Then, the harassed look leaving him as if he had thrown it off like a bad dream, he would add that Petushka had a reason for everything he did. "God tells *him* what to do, but even he does not always know why *he* should do this or that, because not even to Petushka does God tell everything."

"Da, da, sometimes Petushka smokes tobacco and drinks whisky to fool the Soviet government that he too is a Bolshevik. Then he can stay longer in Russia to help the brothers and sisters there."

The Soviet government had shown favor to the Dukhobors in Caucasia. Traditionally good agriculturalists, traditionally opposed to tsardom, they were of the peasantry who for hundreds of years had been ground down by Imperial state and church. In accord with the Soviet government's agricultural policy of 1920, they were allotted land about sixty miles from the city of Rostov and asked to elect a leader for the commune. They chose Peter Petrovich; the Soviet confirmed the election. Thus did Peter become a combination of Dukhobor God and Bolshevik commissar in Russia, several years before Plotnikoff and Verashagin were sent by the faithful in Canada.

"I will soon go to Canada to educate all the Dukhobors there," Peter told Semonoff in Rostov.

Semonoff, an Independent Dukhobor from Arlee, Saskatchewan, was touring European Russia as a guest of the U. S. S. R., in 1925. With Ernie Bolton, organizer for the Farmers' Union of Canada, Semonoff, all expenses paid, was delegate to the International Farmers' Council. A zealous Soviet had invited workers and farmers from capitalist countries to see the show places of the world's first socialist republic. Semonoff had cannily taken this opportunity to revisit the land of his birth.

"Pravda," Verigin agreed, "I do not like this government very well. As you say, Semon, the Canadian government is much better."

Semonoff left Moscow without Peter. He returned to Saskatchewan where he earned the displeasure of both the Soviet and the Communist party of Canada, by telling of the famine; how poor were the peasants outside of the special *kolhozi*; how some of the agrarian *komisare* were like old-time tax collectors, only they wore breeches with leather backsides in them; and how he, Semon, was robbed of his money at night on a train in the Ukraine when some bandeit cut through his pocket while he slept.

Peter continued to correspond with the Dukhobors in Canada, telling them how he needed money; not for himself but for the brothers and sisters near Rostov. Not only the Community and Sons of Freedom Dukhobors responded to these appeals, but Independents also sent several thousand dollars.

Among the Independents to whom Peter wrote was his cousin Andrew Katelnikoff, of Yorkton. Andrew had emigrated to Canada on his own when he was nineteen. With capable hands and business shrewdness, he worked his way from carpenter's laborer to building contractor in Yorkton. He knew his cousin

Peter Petrovich Verigin. With cynical humor he visualized the huge and tragic *shutka* which would follow Peter's arrival on the already disturbed scene.

Many Independents now wished to believe that young Peter's coming might, in some inexplicable way, work the miracle of banding all the Dukhobors together in one great happy family.

Andrew, who "would as soon build a brick house on a muskeg as have faith in such an idea," was, nevertheless, willing to act as unofficial agent between Peter and the Independents, thus having a hand in a monstrous practical joke which was to provide him with ironical chuckles for the rest of his life.

"Yes, yes, Cousin soon is coming to Canada to help everyone. He says so in his letter. But first he needs some more money," said Andrew, handing the letter to his wife.

"How do you always know that *you* are so smart?" said Polia. "Possibly Peter *has* changed since you wasted your time with him in Caucasia when you were his hunting dog and every time he missed a bird he used to shower you with buckshot."

"Da, da, possibly next winter we will grow cucumbers in the snow, possibly we will feed sawdust to the cow and have more milk." Andrew shrugged his shoulders and put more lemon in his tea.

"Postoi! Stop! If you know so much why do you not go out and tell the others?" Polia asked without looking up from the letter.

"They would believe me as much as if I went out in the garden and told the potato bugs not to eat Paris green," Andrew replied.

Peter Petrovich Verigin's letter was written from Rostov, March 22, 1926.

Dear brother Andrew,

For your letters I am very thankful, and especially for the last one in which you let me know that our dear mother arrived safely. . . .

I send you many thanks and greetings . . . We are all thankful to Providence for our health, and we are thankful to the Heavenly Father. Slava Bohu.

Everywhere and at all times I have had to depend on my own strength and resources . . . resources very limited . . . while my expenses were very great and becoming more so. . . . I think that you, Andrew, should know that the present circumstances do not admit

of too much discussion . . . your help will bring great relief to us in our cause, which is not personal. . . .

After receiving this letter, please go to see Prokofia Feodorivich Verigin and tell him as follows: Go to all the farmers [Independents] whom you know as you know yourselves and make my request to everyone separately, those who will answer my call for financial aid . . . give them a receipt . . . as soon as you collect one thousand dollars, don't wait one day, but send them immediately, by telegraph. . . . If you ask how much money is needed . . . my answer is "as much as you can send" as I must have from you not less than five thousand dollars. If you can send more, send it. These dollars are necessary for me and will allow me to depart quickly. . . . I repeat, the sum should not alarm you, nor should return of the money worry you . . . and so dear Andrew . . . God will allow us to meet . . .

At the same time I am writing to friends in foreign lands requesting that they also should not neglect this opportunity to forward money to me, and not less than five thousand dollars . . .

The crop was good but hail and dampness damaged much of the wheat. All the time there was much rain. The need is felt by many. I kiss you all.

Your well-wisher and brother,

P. VERIGIN.

Independents responded to this call for funds. Sons of Freedom contributed from their small wealth. Summer came and went. Fall gave way to winter. Still Peter did not come. In December, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood borrowed \$350,000 from the National Trust Company. The loan, negotiated by Shukin, Cazakoff and lesser managers, was to replenish a depleted treasury and pay pressing debts. How much of that money was sent to Peter Verigin was not revealed.

Riotous living now occupied much of Peter's time in Rostov, according to Soviet authorities who first took away his office in the commune, then sentenced him to a prison term. He was guilty, the workers' court found, of being under the influence of strong drink and chasing two Dukhobors in the commune. He knocked some teeth out of the head of one of them, and beat the other insensible.

When in 1927, the Dukhobors in Canada heard that the Soviet government would further "persecute" their leader by sending him to Turkestan, they wrote frantic appeals to John Tregubov, in Moscow; Paul Ivanovich Birukov in Switzerland, and to others whom they hoped would petition for his release. .

John Tregubov, anti-Imperialist journalist during the reign of the last tsar, prevailed upon Soviet authorities for his release.

Moscow agreed that it would be cheaper and less troublesome to issue to Peter Petrovich a passport out of the country, rather than exile him in Turkestan.

Ottawa was led to believe that the new Peter Verigin would have a sobering influence on the Dukhobors and encourage them to send their children to school.

So, in the fall of 1927, Peter, leaving behind him his wife and family in whom he had little interest, set out for Canada.

In Paris, he was joined by Paul Birukov. Eighty years old, he had suffered from loneliness since the death of Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy had been the sun, Birukov the moon. Without the sun, the moon ceased to shine. Poor old Birukov was one who must have a cause to espouse, and now with Peter Verigin he set sail for New York.

When the *Aquitania* reached New York on September 16, Michael Cazakoff, in his best suit, was there to meet them. Verigin returned Cazakoff's bow.

In the hotel next day Verigin asked the now miserable Cazakoff: "Where are the books of the Community? Why did you not bring them with you? And you tell me that the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood is one million and a half dollars in debt, you bandeit?"

They went to Ottawa where the new Verigin made a favorable impression on officials of the Canadian government. He spoke of the need for education among the Dukhobors, and agreed that they should conform to the laws of Canada.

At Winnipeg he told the *Free Press Prairie Farmer* he was anxious that the Dukhobors should have the best educational advantages without relinquishing any of their religious tenets. "We are willing to give the government our energies and our brains, but not our souls," he said. Like many others in the world, he too greatly admired Tolstoy; had grieved at his death; was very fortunate to have Paul Birukov, Tolstoy's secretary and friend, accompanying him to Canada.

From Winnipeg, he telephoned to Andrew Katelnikoff in Yorkton, requesting only Andrew be at the station to meet him there.

"I do not want to see the people the first day, dear Andrew. You know what it is like, one is very tired . . . traveling."

So when the train stopped at Yorkton, only Andrew, Pete

Morozoff and Peter Makaroff were on the platform. Two or three of the faithful who had been waiting for days, stood at a safe and respectful distance.

"Hello," said Andrew in English, as Peter's handsome mustached face with Tartar eyes appeared in the coach vestibule.

"Sdorovo," Peter nodded, almost bowed, and stepped down to the platform.

Makaroff shook hands.

Paul Birukov, white beard flowing, reached up to Andrew's leathery face, and kissed him on each cheek.

"Where is the automobile? No taxi?" asked Verigin, as they walked across Yorkton's main street.

"Oh, no, dear Cousin. When you said you were tired traveling, I felt sorry for you and decided you would enjoy some exercise. It is not far to my house," Andrew added, winking at Makaroff.

Makaroff excused himself. He was in Yorkton because of business at the Court House. He would go there now and join them later.

Mrs. Katelnikoff, flushed with excitement and cooking dinner over the stove, welcomed Peter warmly. He was still washing his hands in the enamel basin above the sink, when Andrew showed the guests their places at the table in the front room.

"Sadis, Mike," Andrew said to Cazakoff who put his comb back in his pocket and remained standing.

"Not yet," Cazakoff rolled his eyes upward.

"I should wait until Petushka tells me where to sit."

"Petushka has nothing to say here, in my house."

Peter, who overheard this, came in to find everyone seated except Cazakoff.

"Before we begin eating, we will stand up and thank the Lord for His blessings," said Peter, unable to conceal his irritation.

"We don't usually say a grace," said Andrew. "But it is all right if you want to say one, Cousin."

"Michael," said Verigin, "you will speak the prayer."

Everyone stood while Cazakoff sanctimoniously carried out the order.

During the meal, the conversation turned to education; Birukov eulogized Tolstoy, spoke of his own plans for education among the Dukhobors.

"Da, da, Tolstoy was a great man," agreed Verigin. "I have read all his books. Very wise philosophy. I could not bring him here because he is dead, so I brought his secretary Paul Ivano-

vich Birukov. We will make the sun shine for the ignorant ones, those whom my father kept in darkness. Eh, Paul Ivanovich?"

After dinner, J. M. Patrick, who had been old Peter's lawyer, came to pay his respects to the new Peter. Then Petushka got into bed in Andrew's house and slept for a few hours. He awakened so refreshed that he walked briskly to his deceased father's Yorkton residence and there set upon the unfortunate Cazakoff in stentorian tones. A small group of awed Dukhobors listened outside.

"Oh, where are those \$350,000? Blood of your mother, I will find out where they have gone. I will audit the books when we go to Verigin tomorrow. You will find out that I know every system of bookkeeping, Italian, Russian, Turkish, American, single entry, double entry, triple entry, one million times blood of your mother, you *sukinsin*, son of a bitch."

Birukov's presence had at first restrained Verigin's vituperation. But now his presence made no difference. Like an emasculated and disillusioned Santa Claus, the little old man sobbed like a child, tears creeping down his cheeks and disappearing into his beard. He had not money to buy a ticket back to Switzerland. And when he implored Peter to send him back, Peter upbraided him as a deserter.

Makaroff was not present to hear these tirades. But that evening at the brickyard with an audience of a hundred and fifty packed into the two small rooms, he heard Verigin speak fluently for nonviolence and pacifism.

Late that night in the steam bath Makaroff remarked to Katelnikoff that Verigin had given a truly marvelous address.

"Da," Andrew poured cold water over his steaming shoulders, "you will hear him make more speeches."

The next day Makaroff, puzzled concerning the new Verigin, returned to Saskatoon. Petushka himself, Birukov and Katelnikoff, a Dukhobor chauffeur at the wheel, drove to Verigin; several automobiles and trucks of Dukhobors following behind.

At Verigin, in front of the ruler's residence, more than 4,000 of the old and the new faithful were assembled in the traditional v. A psalm of joy floated over the railway track and past the tall grain elevators to the frame buildings on Main Street. The autumn sun, shining down on the people, glinted on the black fenders of Verigin's automobile as it entered the courtyard. Stepping briskly from the car the new Petushka walked past the white-clothed table with its bread, salt and water. On the steps

of the lower balcony he turned to face them. As of old they sang until the psalm was finished, the last note seeming to be left suspended in space like that of an Indian chant.

With great expectancy, they waited for him to begin the conventional greeting. Twice he knelt and touched his forehead to the much scrubbed floor of the balcony, twice they went on their knees and touched their foreheads to the ground. Women wiped away tears with handkerchiefs, men brushed them aside with soil-worn hands; children instinctively knew this to be a day they would remember.

"Dear brothers and sisters in Christ," said Peter in his most ingratiating voice, "truly I think it will be good if I go upstairs to the second balcony. From there you will be able to hear me better."

He paused on the first step, as if deep in thought, then turned again to face them. There was silence except for the distant whistle of a train. Then his voice, resounding, prophetic:

"God tells me to say that as soon as I put my feet on this first step, I thought of the many times my father walked where I stand now. Pravda, I know who killed my father. Many times I felt angry and revengeful. But the Christ within me said, 'Forgive them, they know not what they do.'"

"Petushka knows the government killed his father," an old lady whispered.

Impressively he ascended the stairs, and from the upper balcony proceeded to deliver a two-hour sermon of ambiguity, contradiction, mysticism, wisdom, practical advice about farming, verbatim quotations from the New Testament, and lewd nonsense.

However, some of Verigin's address had purpose.

He knew the people had divided themselves into several groups, Community, Independents, Sons of Freedom. For that division he could blame no one, because God had so ordered. "But now the time has come when we will all gather in one great group, and we will go forward as brothers and sisters to find the better life here on earth, firm in our faith in Dukhobor principles."

There was great hardships ahead, he said. "But God will help us stand by our principles and we will have a new slogan, 'The welfare of the universe is not worth the life of one child.' Not one of our young men will be given to the government to join an army, to kill others or be killed. Our children will be the true followers of Jesus Christ and not the slaves of Satan.

"We will never be murderers. Who among you could imagine Christ an officer in an army? Yet we must not try to save our lives. We must not be guided by intellect and science, but only give our lives to God. Can you remember Lot's wife? Christ said, 'Whosoever will try to save his life will lose it; and whosoever will lose his life will save his life.'

"Christ said, go forth and preach the gospel. The gospel is knowledge. Knowledge is in schools. We will have schools, and Paul Ivanovich Birukov will help us in these schools. I have already told the newspaper reporters that we will give everything to the government and take everything the government has to offer; but we will not give our souls, nor will we take anything that is Satan's."

Then he lauded the Sons of Freedom as preachers and pilgrims; they were the "ringing bells" who went ahead to clear the way for everyone. Sometimes when Sons of Freedom were clearing the way, they left stumps sticking out of the ground and Community people fell over the stumps and blamed it on the Sons of Freedom. "But all of us know that neither clearing the way nor following is easy. The pathway to God is not a cement road. The road to the Devil is paved, and greased so that you can slide down hill easier on it. Sons of Freedom will never be slaves of corruption. That is one slogan that we will write on a banner."

Next he praised the Independents or "farmer Dukhobors." Some of them were Pharisees, had fallen into materialism, had sinned. But it was necessary to sin in order to repent, and no one could repent until he had sinned, and no one could be saved until he repented. Thus there was great hope for the "farmer Dukhobors," the "right wing."

The center party was the Community Dukhobors. They had done a great thing by staying in the community because they kept the Sons of Freedom from going too far to the "left" and the Independents from going too far to the "right." The Community people were the core. Sometimes it had seemed to the Sons of Freedom and to the Independents that the core was getting rotten. But that was not harmful because every core of every apple had to become rotten before the seeds would sprout and grow a new tree.

On and on he went, explaining that he knew about the "right" and the "left," because he was an official of the Soviet government; next he said he was not an official of the Soviet govern-

ment. He urged thrift and saving of money in one breath and said that it was useless to save money, in another.

"And the time is coming I tell you truly when money in Canada will be no good. That is the way it was in Russia, and there I papered the outhouses with rubles to keep the draft from giving me a cold in my ass."

The crowd moved uneasily at this startling revelation.

Eventually he finished and entered his father's rooms—his now. In two's and three's and dozens the faithful climbed the stairs as if to Heaven, left him money which he did not have to ask for, thanked him, bowed and backed out the door.

Next day he spoke at Benito, on the following days, at Buchanan and at Kylemore. At these places they left the money beside the jug of water, loaf of bread and jar of salt.

During his address at Buchanan he lauded Paul Birukov as a great man, a friend of Leo Tolstoy whom he praised as a yet greater man. "I have read all his books . . . very good philosophy. . . . Tolstoy is like a beautiful apple. You eat, digest it, it comes out of you." With a lewd gesture of his hand, "But I can shit out twenty like him in one day."

The faithful went home, for hours to ponder over "Petushka's hidden meanings."

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

PETER RASPUTIN

PETER PETROVICH VERIGIN continued his inaugural tour of Saskatchewan. From each large meeting he invited two or three Dukhobors to accompany him as his guests, in order to signify the new unity.

Having delivered orations to the community people of the South and Thunder Hill colonies and the Sons of Freedom and Independents thereabout, and having collected a small club bag full of money, he turned westward toward Blaine Lake district. Blaine Lake district, once the Saskatchewan River Colony of old Peter, had for ten years been Independent, with the exception of a few Sons of Freedom.

"You will have to be careful what you say there. Those people left your father years ago," warned Andrew whose implike curiosity compelled him to accept Peter's invitation.

Long before they reached Blaine Lake, something went wrong with their automobile and Verigin, with Andrew, boarded a train for Saskatoon. In a room in the Western Hotel, Verigin sat on the bed with his head in his hands and groaned.

"What is the matter, dear cousin?"

"I feel very bad, like a fever," said Verigin. "I should have some medicine I'm sure."

"I will call a doctor."

"No, no, a doctor is not necessary. I will be all right if you ask Peter Makaroff to bring some whisky."

Andrew telephoned Makaroff, telling him that "poor Petushka has a bit of fever. He thinks some whisky would cure it."

Verigin brightened up when Makaroff entered the door with a bottle.

"Good health," said Verigin as they raised their glasses. He coughed, the Russian compliment to good vodka. "Peter, Peter, I will never forget you, you have helped me so much today. You are a very good lawyer."

Next day Makaroff drove Peter and Andrew to the Dukhobor holiday grounds about three miles from Blaine Lake town. It was snowing and sleeting beneath a dull cold sky, so the Dukhobors

had put up a great tent, borrowed from the Mennonites. It was packed with all who could stand in it, men on the right, women on the left, more than 1,500. Outside in the damp fall air stood a few hundred more, including Mennonites and a few Ukrainians who had come out of curiosity.

Verigin's oratory was much the same as elsewhere, except that it was less lewd. Twice he bowed to the ground, and so did his audience. He referred to himself as "Chestiakov," meaning "the purger." He would purge all the Dukhobors of their sins, and unite them forever.

Especially fascinated by Petushka's oratorical powers was John Bonderoff. He had never forgotten, when as a boy some twenty years before, he had heard Peter Petrovich Verigin tell the Sons of Freedom that God would make Devil's tails grow on their bodies if they persisted in going naked.

Bonderoff whispered to Andrew Katelnikoff, requesting an introduction to Petushka.

Something about Bonderoff's greenish eyes seemed to attract Verigin, for he immediately asked that Bonderoff be included in the invitation to Nikito Popoff's house after the meeting.

Birukov was already at Nikito's house, having driven there with Nikito. Verigin immediately asked for a room; he wished to rest a little before eating. Upstairs he lighted a cigarette, inhaling with great satisfaction; as yet he felt a bit uneasy about smoking before those who did not use tobacco.

When Makaroff came to say the meal was nearly ready, he and Verigin had a heated argument about Quakers.

Vigorously defending the Quakers and suggesting to Verigin that his tirade against them showed ingratitude in face of the voluntary aid the Quakers had given the Dukhobors, Makaroff's reasoning of the case only served to send Verigin into a tantrum.

"You fool," Verigin shouted, shaking a finger close to Makaroff's nose. "You do not know how to think. I tell you truly that I, Peter Petrovich Chestiakov Verigin, will within a year from today convince all the Quakers in the world that I am right, and they will be my followers."

During the next two days Peter and his doubtful court visited prominent Dukhobor farmers in the district, then returned south to Saskatoon. At the Canadian National station, he instructed his treasurer to open the club bag of bills and give \$300 each to Nikito Popoff and Fred Sookerokoff, the two unity delegates from Blaine Lake district who were to accompany him to British Columbia.

"Those dollars are for your expenses," said Verigin. "I know it costs money to travel, and if you need more let me know." John Bonderoff looked longingly at the departing train, and returned to Blaine Lake. Andrew Katelnikoff went back to Yorkton to attend his carpentering and philosophize over the events of the week.

There were fifteen in the unity party bound for British Columbia, including Cazakoff and Birukov. When night came Peter would not take a berth in a sleeping car.

"Nyet, nyet, I will not waste the hard-earned money of the toiling people on such luxuries," he told his audience in the day coach. "I am of the proletariat. See that bag up there," he pointed to the club bag of money on the rack above, "all that will be used to help the people."

"Petushka, is it safe to leave so many dollars like that? Possibly we should hide it?" asked Cazakoff solicitously.

"Nyet, nyet, no one will touch my money. I could put thousands of dollars here on the seat and no one would touch them. One time in Russia, in a train half full of bandits, I put 50,000 rubles on the seat and went to sleep. When I woke, every ruble was there. But ten other men on the train had everything stolen," Verigin declared.

Before the party reached Cowley, Alberta, everyone but Peter suffered from lack of sleep. Somehow, he seemed able to do with three or four hours sleep out of the twenty-four, and when the others yawned or nodded their heads, he would launch into a lecture about laziness.

His speech to the small community at Cowley was similar to his previous orations, except that the presence of Nikito Popoff and Sookerokoff somewhat restrained his passion for impossible stories and vile language. When the party boarded the train again for British Columbia, Peter Makaroff was on it. He had left Saskatoon after the main party.

Along the rolling foothills of southern Alberta went the Canadian Pacific's Kootenay Express; winding into the Rocky Mountains up to Crow's Nest Pass and down the west side of the watershed. Climbing again to Cranbrook, then down to Kootenay Landing where the river steamer with its white wisp of smoke waited to take them on forty-five miles of emerald-green water, edged by forest covered mountains to Nelson.

Apart from remarking that the mountains were "nothing com-

pared to Caucasia," Peter had little to say about scenery. He preferred to create an impression of nonchalance. From Cazakoff, who was conversant with the route of travel, he obtained advance information about landmarks, towns and villages, and he would say to his courtiers, "That is Fernie . . . this is Elko we are now approaching . . . yes, yes, I know all about the country. I studied everything in Russia before I came to Canada."

At Nelson, Shukin was standing on the dock, some others at a respectful distance behind him. Shukin began bowing even before Petushka left the boat, and when Petushka kissed him on the mouth his lips trembled.

In the banya, by old Peter's Nelson residence, the party had a steam bath; then dinner, after which Peter kept them up, talking, until four o'clock in the morning. Shukin, who would not sit down in the presence of Petushka, was almost asleep on his feet.

Soon after daylight they set out in cars over the winding rock hewn road to Brilliant. When from the highway, looking down on the river and Brilliant village, he saw old Peter's tomb, he commanded the Dukhobor chauffeur to stop, and ran down the embankment. The others followed to see the new Petushka on his knees beside the grave of the old. While he sobbed aloud, a welcoming psalm welled up from the assemblage.

As he walked to his place at the front of the v-shaped assemblage between the jam factory and the community offices, Dunia, his mother, came to speak with him. He strode on and waited until the psalm ended.

After his speech, Peter had his evening meal served in old Peter's Brilliant residence. There were thirty of the select with him, and a picked choir singing by the windows outside. He requested this hymn or that folk song, and laughed loudly at his own jokes. Those at the end of the table, who could not always hear the jokes echoed his laughter.

Beads of perspiration gathered on his forehead, and, complaining of the heat, he got up to open one of the windows. Once, twice, three times he pushed upward, but the window, painted in its casement, refused to budge. Several had half risen from their benches to help him, when suddenly he flung his arm through the window and sent a shower of glass on the heads of the startled choir. They ceased singing abruptly. The glass had not stopped tinkling before Verigin, opening and closing his fists, and brandishing them over his head, let loose a barrage of profanity which

not only mentioned the Trinity but ranged through various animals and their close relatives. He ended by advising the caretaker to have incestuous relationship with his mother.

Having thus relieved his feelings, he resumed his place at the table amidst whispers of, "Da, da, the caretaker is to blame . . . The window should have worked . . . It was very hot. Poor Petushka, sometimes he is very nervous because of the way the Bolsheviks tortured him in Russia. . . ."

Next morning before six o'clock, he was inquiring if everyone was at work, and he began an inspection of the machine shop, where he found fault with everything.

"This lathe must be turned around. . . . Wrong way. . . . That belt is too tight, it will burn out the bearings. . . . Tighten the lacing on this belt. . . ."

The mechanics, nodding their heads, and marveling at his perception, made these unnecessary changes.

Leaving Brilliant astir, he set out for Grand Forks Colony by automobile. At a small village by the edge of the colony he stopped to question the bearded patriarch to whom the rest of the villagers looked for guidance in everyday affairs. The fine-appearing old muzhik answered the many questions in his pleasant, respectful voice. Then Verigin, as if momentarily at a loss what next to ask, pointed to the towering mountains.

"Where is the boundary line of our property up there?" he asked.

"Ya neszniao, I don't know," the old man answered. "It is like this, Petushka. Those mountaintops are very far away; no one lives there, nor will the land there grow anything. So we did not go there to see where are the boundary stakes. . . ."

"So! This is how you attend to the business of the toiling people. How do you not know there is gold on these mountaintops? You bastard, you are too lazy to go there and see. . . . You fool, crook, bandit, sukinsin, a million times blood of your mother."

The old man trembled, his face the color of ashes, tears in his astounded blue eyes. It was not what he had hoped for from his God; he who had worked so long and hard for the Community. But he said nothing in reply, his gnarled hands hung loosely by his sides, his lips parted, his shoulders sagged.

Makaroff turned away, nauseated; still more depressing was the realization that the old fellow accepted the tirade as fate, as one must accept a thunderbolt should it fall from the hands of the Great God beyond a blue and cloudless sky.

Early in the morning of the day that the new Petushka was expected, the faithful of Grand Forks assembled in front of the meetinghouse. They stood all morning singing psalms and reciting prayers. Through the afternoon they continued, traditional custom preventing them from eating or even sitting down until their leader should arrive.

The sun sank behind the western rim of the mountains, and still the assemblage waited, singing wearily. About midnight an old man fainted, and then it was decided that everyone should go to sleep, as it seemed evident that the new Petushka would not appear until next morning.

Peter, all this time, was "resting" in his father's residence. He slept for an hour or so, took longer than usual over his shaving, perused newspapers in Russian language and intermittently poured himself whisky. He was deliberately oblivious of the waiting people, until he heard that they had gone to sleep. Then shedding his dilatoriness as if it had become a shirt of fire, he rushed downstairs and shouted, "*Stoi! Stoi!* Is this the way you receive me?"

Like bewildered cattle they rose to their feet, and shuffling to their places, began a psalm of welcome. When the psalm had ended, Peter launched into his oration.

Sweat rolled from his face as he told them how to earn eternal life. "When Judgment Day comes, you will see me on one side of God, and Christ on the other side. You, the true Dukhobors will be behind us, the jury. All other people of the world will be out in front, in the prisoner's dock, getting judged. . . ."

As if drawing unto himself what remained of their ebbing strength, he grew yet more vital as they became more tired. Sometime after three in the morning he finished his oration and went upstairs to his room.

By six o'clock next morning he was up and about. Stalking like a genie through the orchards on the hillsides, criticizing the system of irrigation, condemning the selection of apple trees.

Having stirred Grand Forks Colony from its orchard roots to its mountaintops, he went to Trail where he summoned his "commissars" to meet him in the Dukhobor rooming house which was kept for the Community men who worked in the smelter of the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company. At this "supreme council of Dukhobor Soviets," as he termed it, *komisari* were to be elected.

"We must be democratic, no dictatorship by anyone," he said.

"I will nominate Gabriel Verashagin as commissar of education."

Gabriel was elected unanimously. And so it went on, with commissars of industry, trade, commerce; almost everything but a minister of war: "We do not believe in an army, so we cannot have army commissars."

After the formation of this mythical Soviet republic, which was soon to be forgotten, Petushka returned to Brilliant where he appointed himself auditor for the books of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited. For three days and most of three nights he badgered Cazakoff and Shukin, ordering them to bring him this statement and that inventory.

Cazakoff and Shukin, bowing and thanking him, brought him sheets of paper which he tore to pieces.

Nikito Popoff, Sookerokoff, Makaroff and several others decided to go home to Saskatchewan. They had had enough. Peter was a madman, a *milinki* Rasputin.

Peter, hearing of their intention before they left, delivered a wonderful oration about loyalty to the cause, co-operation, peace. But at the last there was nothing for him to do but embrace the departing guests, who remained cold to him in the face of his appeals. Kneeling in front of them, tears streaming down his cheeks, he kissed their boots.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

FANTASIA

PETER PETROVICH VERIGIN, now frequently referring to himself as "Chestiakov" the "purger," continued to keep his followers in an agitated state. Throughout his continual orations ran a theme of "unification." He would everywhere unite the Dukhobors in one great Christian family. His ambiguous assertions concerning everything from cucumbers to eternal life, his contradictory speech and behavior, Biblical quotations, obscenity, energy and powers of oratory, held his listeners spellbound in their confusion.

He ordered a mimeographing machine for Birukov and allowed the incurable old zealot to typewrite vast educational programs of which nothing was to materialize beyond a series of circular letters. Thousands of books in Russian and English were to be ordered; eventually, Dukhobor newspapers and magazines would be published, moving pictures made to portray Dukhobor history, and the "great things to come." Day, night, and Sunday schools would be opened. So immersed in this dream did Birukov become, and so busy was Peter with yet vaster plans, that Birukov felt secure in sending to Switzerland for his wife and family.

Verigin decreed a series of "unity" conferences in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Delegates to the first of these in Saskatchewan assembled in midwinter at Canora, the delegatsi bringing with them lengthy resolutions which were to be submitted to Petushka.

On the appointed day Peter himself did not arrive. Instead he sent a telegram, ". . . May God bless you in your work. Have faith, hope, love. Be a true follower of the true way of life, the Named Dukhobors. I am sorry I am unable to be at the conference. Always yours, Peter Chestiakov."

The bewildered delegates read and reread the telegram. What did Petushka mean by "Named Dukhobors"? Why did he not come? No one knew. But the conference went on for several days, discussing unification, government, religion and morality.

Then Verigin sent word that it should adjourn, and another be called for February 24, at Verigin. The delegates returned to their

home districts, where the faithful vied with one another in making resolutions that they thought would please Petushka.

Once more the Saskatchewan delegates set out for the conference, while bearded, rubber-shod Sons of Freedom boarded a train in British Columbia to travel more than 1,000 miles to Saskatchewan.

When Verigin himself arrived at Verigin, he went upstairs to his rooms, sending word down to the meeting on the ground floor that it should proceed without him. This unexpected order left the chairman at a decided disadvantage, but he opened the convention with a prayer and a psalm in song, hoping for the best. Delegates contributed brief speeches about "unity," resolutions were read and discussed hesitantly, and still Petushka stayed upstairs like a god in his heaven, the delegates below sweating in a sea of resolutions, argument, apprehension, and insufficient ventilation.

Verigin commissioned the chairman and secretary of his conference executive to "go everywhere among the people and explain the report."

And so the winter wore on and gave way to spring.

Under the auspices of spring air, the Sons of Freedom grew in numbers and boldness. "We will make our children the servants of Christ but will not allow them to enter public schools which would turn them into slaves of corruption, and we will never make entries in books of births, marriages and deaths for we know that the Creator has already entered us into the book of Life," the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, Sons of Freedom of Grand Forks, wrote to the prime minister of Canada, March 20.

With yet warmer weather and greener grass came scattered outbreaks of nudism in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. These demonstrations so disturbed some of the Independents that toward the end of May they called a conference at which they implored Petushka to admonish the Sons of Freedom.

Verigin called a conference of the "Named Dukhobors," to be held in Buchanan, Saskatchewan, on June 27, two days prior to Peter's Day. The Named Dukhobors, he revealed, were all those who held allegiance to himself.

Resolutions about education, governments and laws, were discussed as usual. Some of these, laboriously drafted, later received the approval of the Canadian government. Yet the men respon-

sible for these deliberations incongruously looked to Peter Verigin for guidance.

On Peter's Day, more than 1,000 of his followers assembled in ceremonial fashion by the shores of Devil's Lake, a large slough on the green Prairie. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and all day they had eaten none of the food they had brought for the picnic, because tradition was that they should first hear their leader's address.

Peter should have been there by noon. At four o'clock clouds were gathering in the sky and the assemblage decided to eat before the rain came. Sitting beneath the poplar trees, they began their meal. A group of men and women demonstrated "freedom" by disrobing and wading naked into Devil's Lake.

When Peter arrived he was annoyed with his followers for daring not to wait for him, and at once began a harangue which threatened to last far into the evening. But his audience, glancing overhead at the gathering rain clouds, left one by one to hitch their horses to their wagons and democrats.

In the end, Peter returned to British Columbia, where he ordered one meeting after another, and while the faithful sang psalms and waited for him, he sat in his house drinking whisky.

To Brilliant that summer went the Rev. Peter Bryce, who later was to become Moderator of the United Church of Canada. For nearly twenty years he had been chief medical officer of the Federal Immigration Service, and before that he had been awarded gold and silver medals in the University of Toronto. A quiet and carefully mannered man with graying hair he was impressed by Shukin, the jam factory and "these people who are trying to imitate the life of Christ."

When he asked Shukin why the women had their hair bobbed, Shukin replied that bobbed hair had always been a Dukhobor custom. "So that I made then, incidentally, a scientific discovery as to the source of our most modern female fad," Peter Bryce later wrote in his booklet, *The Value to Canada of the Continental Immigrant, Chapter VII, "A Day with the Dukhobors of the Kootenay Valley, British Columbia."*

"This simple Russian people from the far Caucasus," wrote Bryce, "possessed the pure artistic taste shown in this remarkable creation of modern art . . . the elegant mausoleum of gray granite, which marks the tomb of Prince Peter Verigin whose memory is held in reverence by every good Dukhobor as being the Moses

who brought them to the promised land." And Bryce was exceptionally pleased that the Christian Brotherhood was "as far as possible from Bolshevism." Peter H. Bryce did not have the pleasure of hearing one of Peter P. Verigin's speeches, and if he had, it is probable that the diplomatic Shukin would have refrained from verbatim translation.

In the fall, Peter Verigin, ever moving, returned to Saskatchewan. The prime minister of Canada was touring Western Canada, and the Blaine Lake Dukhobors took this opportunity of inviting Mackenzie King to address them in the town which was within his own constituency of Prince Albert.

Peter Verigin, over the telephone from Langham, agreed to preside at the meeting, which was attended by hundreds of Dukhobors and others. But when Peter did not arrive, his faithful made excuses for his absence, the meeting passing without incident other than that several Sons of Freedom offered to disrobe in honor of the prime minister.

To government officials and newspaper reporters, Verigin was politely aloof, almost saintly, assuring his interviewers that he was doing his best to have his people obey the laws and send their children to school.

To the Sons of Freedom he held the government up to ridicule, praising the "ringing bells" for their belief in freedom from all laws other than God's.

School attendance dwindled almost to nothing in Grand Forks Colony, so that in January of 1929, Colonel McMullin, superintendent of provincial police, again instructed his men to arrest parents who had failed to send their children to school. Near the town of Grand Forks, some fifty Dukhobors, led by the naked Strepnikoff and his wife, resisted arrest and were sprayed with tear gas.

While Peter Verigin continued to assure the authorities how sorry he was that the Sons of Freedom would not obey the laws, he told the Sons of Freedom that he had to tell them one thing and the government another, otherwise he would be persecuted by the government, possibly deported from Canada, and they, the Sons of Freedom, would in consequence suffer for lack of divine leadership.

Paul Ivanovich Birukov, finally disillusioned, was overcome with a stroke which partly paralyzed him. In a wheel chair, accompanied by his wife and family, he returned to Switzerland where, soon afterwards, he died.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

NUDE STRATEGY

OF THE THREE FACTIONS "united" in what Verigin called "Named Dukhobors," by far the largest group was the Community folk, all of whom trusted their destiny to him.

Independents were second in numerical importance, and were last in degree of faith.

It was the Sons of Freedom, thanks to his praise of their views and exploits, who continued to grow in both zeal and numbers, drawing additional converts mainly from Community men and women. New apostles, bearded and rubber-shod young men such as Paul Vatkin and Peter Maloff, went forth as "ringing bells" and "scouts on the hilltops" to preach the various beliefs or their enigmatic and flexible creed. At the same time there was a movement of Sons of Freedom from the mountain valleys of British Columbia to the prairies of Saskatchewan.

Verigin, while lauding the sons and daughters for their antipathy to "material civilization," governments and education, ordered the erection of additional buildings in Community centers, and dispatched a delegation to Ottawa with instructions to inform the Canadian prime minister that all Dukhobors wished to obey the government's laws.

For this mission to Ottawa, Verigin chose John Bonderoff, who was well pleased with the prospect of traveling more than 1,500 miles, at the end of which he would explain the "Named Dukhobors" to Prime Minister Mackenzie King. A second delegate selected by Verigin was the fat and cringing Vasili Mahonin, who, though slightly dubious concerning a journey to that iniquitous place, the seat of government, was glad to leave behind him Petushka's threats and profanity. As legal counsel and interpreter for the delegation, Verigin retained Peter Makaroff, the lawyer from Saskatoon.

Thus in the early summer of 1929, before the freshness had gone from the poplar leaves, and when the wheat fields of Saskatchewan unrolled like great green carpets on either side of the railway, the delegates and interpreter entrained for Ottawa.

On arriving there they registered at the Château Laurier, the

great castlelike hotel at the foot of Parliament Hill, stronghold of honorable members, senators and rotarians-at-luncheon; patronized by most distinguished visitors and itinerant emissaries on important errands to the capital city of Canada.

"It is truly wonderful, John," said Makaroff, "how you are now a diplomat from the prime minister of the Named Dukhobors to the prime minister of Canada."

"Well," Bonderoff hesitated, "I, that is, we, must do everything to help the people."

"Da, da, that is so," echoed Mahonin sitting in an upholstered chair, his feet pressing against the soft red carpet, hands clasped across his chest. "We must do everything, must help Petushka help the people. Slava Bohu."

"Even when he calls you a sukinsin and hits you on your head," said Makaroff.

Mahonin shifted uncomfortably in his chair.

Bonderoff took from his suitcase a sheaf of typewritten pages, in English and Russian.

"This is no time for idle talk," he said, firmly putting the sheets on the writing table. "We must not waste the public funds with talk. We must now put the Protocol in order to present to the prime minister."

The "Protocol," as Bonderoff insisted on calling it, was a result of one of Verigin's numerous conventions. Its contents had been unanimously agreed upon by about sixty delegates of the Named Dukhobors at a meeting on the farm of Vasili Popoff, near Kam-sack, on June 27, 1928. It set forth that the teachings of the Named Dukhobors were based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Law of God. It went on to say that violence in any form could not be tolerated and included several slogans coined by Verigin, such as, "The welfare of the whole world is not worth the life of one child."

"Crimes and all actions of criminal character cannot come before the Named Dukhobors, because it is plain that any member who commits a crime automatically ceases to be a member of the Society. . . ."

"Education is recognized as an absolute necessity. . . . It is necessary and desirable that our children attend Canadian schools, but teaching of Imperialism and hatred, in its various forms, cannot be tolerated.

"Marriage should be lifelong. 'Whom God hath joined together,

let no man put asunder.' The foundation of marriage is love. Without such love there can be no marriage union, and therefore the married couple should be allowed to separate. The divorced couple should give each other peacefully written permits that each may remarry as they see fit. All questions purporting to the security of the children by the marriage, if any, and compensation to the damaged party, will be settled by the elder members of the Society and their decision should be considered final and binding upon all parties concerned."

Thus in the Protocol there was nothing that the Canadian government had not already granted the Dukhobors, with the exception of the right to divorce without recourse to the courts.

"I think you had better delete that part seeking permission to manage your own divorce court," Makaroff suggested. "I'm certain it will not be granted."

"We must demand everything in the Protocol. We must tell the Canadian premier what is necessary," Bonderoff shook a dramatic finger at Makaroff.

Makaroff got up from his chair. "If you think you are going to impress me with your antics, you are mistaken. And if you are going to ape Petushka when we get in the Parliament Buildings, I tell you that you can go there alone," he said.

Bonderoff subsided. The three set to work to draft a condensation of the Protocol, including the request for free divorce within the Named Dukhobors' society.

In the cathedral-like government buildings they were received by one of the prime minister's secretaries who listened attentively to the contents of the Protocol, and explained that Mr. King would like to see them but that he was, of course, quite busy with the House of Commons in session.

Bonderoff, however, stubbornly insisted on seeing Mr. King himself, in accord with Mr. Verigin's instructions.

Later, when they were ushered into the prime minister's office, he, a roundish man, rose smiling from behind a large desk and shook hands.

"I have a happy recollection of addressing the Dukhobors at Blaine Lake," he said courteously.

Bonderoff, in Russian, said the Dukhobors were happy to live in Canada, a free country.

After Makaroff had translated a few further platitudes, King inquired what might he be able to do for the delegation.

Makaroff read from the résumé of the Protocol. Mr. King nodded affably until he heard the request for divorce outside the courts.

"I understand your request, but would you please tell these gentlemen that the Federal government has no jurisdiction over this. Solemnization of marriages is something you should take up with the provincial government," said the prime minister with a practiced air of quietly dismissing the subject.

"Excuse me, Mr. King," said Makaroff, "but it is the form and substance of laws concerning divorce that is referred to by my clients, and that is exclusively a Federal matter." Makaroff, though personally opposed to the request for free divorce, would let the prime minister know that he, as a lawyer, was acquainted with the law.

"Well," Mackenzie King put his thumbs under his coat lapels, swayed his shoulders almost imperceptibly, "the best I can do is have you referred to the proper department."

Diplomat, genius in the art of evasion, King politely declined to accept copies of the Protocol.

"I suggest you should return tomorrow, when my secretary will have a file about Dukhobors available," he said rising. Smiling, he shook hands, said again how happy he was to have met the delegation, and, good-bye.

The next morning they were received once more by the secretary, who talked pleasantly, everyone deploring the occasional outbreaks of fanaticism among the Dukhobors. However, he did not seem to want the Protocol for his file.

Nobody was enthusiastic about accepting the Protocol, but eventually, after the delegates had walked several miles on marble floors in the course of being passed back and forth from one official to another, they found someone willing to place it in a file. Mahonin said his feet were sore from walking on "many cement floors," and as they left the Parliament Buildings he remarked again on the absence of Cossacks and soldiers.

"Only two guards inside the door, and two policemen by the iron gate, and none of them look angrily at us."

Before leaving Ottawa they saw the House of Commons in session, from the visitors' gallery. Mahonin thought it a good rule that the prime minister did not curse members of Parliament, nor chase his cabinet ministers with a stick, not even the sprightly page boys. Bonderoff, very quiet, his eyes and ears trying to take in everything, could not help but compare the noisy insignificance

of Petushka's court to this orderly assembly of men. Makaroff, listening keenly to the debates, felt that he would like to be down there among the contestants.

Returning to Saskatchewan the trio parted, Makaroff to his law office in Saskatoon, while Bonderoff and Mahonin went to Verigin to report to Petushka.

When they got off the train at Verigin, the station platform was alive with Sons of Freedom. Restless men and women, many of them in their teens, who talked about "ringing bells," the promised land, lauded Petushka, reiterated that education was not necessary.

While the delegation was in Ottawa presenting the Protocol to Mackenzie King and assuring the prime minister that education was necessary, schoolhouses had been burned to the ground in Dukhobor districts of Saskatchewan. Police, unable to penetrate the secrecy surrounding these burnings, were unable to apprehend the incendiaries.

Further trouble soon came. But Verigin himself was two hundred and fifty miles away, in the Blaine Lake district, when on July 13 about one hundred and fifty Sons of Freedom gathered along Kamsack's main street. Carrying banners about toil and peaceful life, singing hymns and preaching, they soon drew a large audience of townspeople and farmers. It was Saturday afternoon in this town of 2,200 population, half of whom were of British descent. The merchants were losing business by this counterattraction and its audience blocking the doorways to their stores.

As if offering competition to the local moving-picture show, the sons and daughters of freedom took up their stand on a vacant lot across from the Elite Theatre, refusing to move when the town policemen asked them to disperse. According to the local by-laws of Kamsack, the town authorities had a right to break up a demonstration that had not received, nor even requested, permission to parade. Thus at an emergency meeting of Mayor Jackett, Police Chief Anderson, the fire chief, the Kamsack officer of the mounted police, and merchants, it was decided to disperse them with the fire hose.

Hearing of this Satan's plan to disrupt their ceremony before God, several men and women took off their clothes. This display of nudity, accompanied by the tolling of the fire bell, made many of the spectators feel that it was the most exciting Saturday afternoon they had ever had in Kamsack.

While the pumps were being connected to the water supply

from the Assiniboine River, three reels of fire hose were unrolled and the firemen advanced, brass nozzles in hand. The assemblage having just finished a psalm, Police Chief Anderson took this opportunity to again ask them to disperse.

"We will first finish our ceremony before God," said a voice from the assemblage. "Sons of Freedom cannot be sons of corruption."

A stream of water from the hose was the answer. The sons and daughters retreated stubbornly, a few fighting for possession of the hose. Fists flew now and again while water flowed in all directions. The force of the water stripped the shirts and dresses from those who had not previously undressed themselves, and who persisted in staying in the path of the hose.

A seventeen-year-old volunteer fireman, just out of collegiate, was amazed and embarrassed to recognize a Dukhobor girl, a friend of his, standing naked before him, her hair soaked with water, defiance in her brown eyes. She was a young school teacher, not more than twenty-two, spoke good English, and he had often escorted her to picture shows and dances.

The bedraggled and angry huddle moved away from Main Street, turned up Third Street, followed by the fire truck, police on horseback, and a throng of townsfolk and farmers. The truck driver wedged in between the retreating parade, but it joined again, after which there was desultory resistance, one stout daughter, her blouse torn by the water, hitting a volunteer fireman over his head with a cordwood stick.

Sergeant Ward, with two more red-coated mounted police, herded them over the bridge west of town and along the highway to Verigin.

For the rest of the evening in Kamsack, little groups stood on the sidewalks and in the stores, arguing about the propriety of the action, or joking about it all.

The townspeople during the next week formed a committee and made representations to the Honourable Robert Forke, minister of immigration at Ottawa, that Peter Verigin "is inciting his people to disregard the laws of Canada." The committee said that Verigin was a fit subject for deportation. A similar petition was sent to the attorney general of Saskatchewan.

The Named Dukhobors of Kamsack district retaliated for the turning of the fire hose on the Sons of Freedom, by refusing to attend Kamsack's annual fair on July 31. This, they declared, was

only a beginning; in future they would buy no clothing, food nor farm machinery repairs in Kamsack.

Verigin himself, alarmed at the hue and cry for his deportation to Russia, hurried to Winnipeg, where, in lengthy newspaper interviews, he condemned the Sons of Freedom and denied all responsibility for the parade into Kamsack, the burning of school-houses and the general resistance to education.

In a statement written by himself in Russian and literally translated in the offices of Ney and Golsof, Winnipeg lawyers, he referred to the Protocol of the Named Dukhobors which he had sent to the highest authorities of the Canadian government. In that Protocol the Dukhobors committed themselves to education and obeying the laws of Canada.

He expressed his "delight and appreciation" that Dukhobors subjected to "humiliation and assaults in Kamsack; nevertheless did not submit to the provocateurs, but remained faithful to their teachings of Christ.

"Ninety per cent of the inhabitants of Kamsack and its vicinity are alarmed at the lawlessness practiced upon innocent people . . . we will strive to obtain from the highest authorities of the government an unbiased investigation into the whole matter.

"On the banners of the Society of Named Dukhobors of Canada there is inscribed:

"Toil and Peaceful Life;

"The Sons of Liberty cannot be Slaves of Corruption.

"The Wealth of the Whole Universe is Not Worth the 'Sacrifice of One Child.'

"With incendiaries, robbers and rogues of whatever calibre and with other so-called Dukhobors, who in their mode of living are 'Black Hundreds,' the Named Dukhobors have not and never will have anything in common.

Verigin's epistles in the newspapers were as confusing to the Canadian public as were his orations to his own followers. But they had the effect of dividing public opinion on the question of his deportation from the country, and the agitation for it subsided.

There was little else to the Kamsack incident. Independent Dukhobors resumed their dealings with the merchants. Boris Sachatoff, the Jewish watch mender, enjoyed himself by philosophizing in letters to the newspapers about the "Gospel of Christ . . . the sinful world" . . . and "peaceful Sons of Freedom tortured in Kamsack by a stream of cold water."

In the belief that longer jail sentences would be a deterrent to sons and daughters of freedom appearing naked in public, the Federal government passed a law allowing a maximum penalty of three years in prison on conviction. Thus when on a Sunday evening toward the end of August, 1929, thirty men and women were arrested near Canora, Saskatchewan, and charged in Yorkton with parading in the nude, four men were sentenced to three years each. Four more were sentenced to two and one half years each; six men to sixty days; one woman to eighteen months; two girls to sixty days; and nine women to two days.

These prison sentences were given publicity in British Columbia in the hope that nudity there would be discouraged, but on August 29, more than one hundred and fifty Dukhobors paraded nude near Bonnington. Police arrested one hundred and twenty-seven, fifty women and fifty-five men were sentenced to six months each in Okalla Jail, eight children were sent to a home on the Pacific coast, and the rest were dismissed.

Paul Vatin, who, with a fanatical gleam in his eyes, traveled up and down the Kootenay valley preaching against governments, schools, and man-made laws, resisted arrest on September 1, and was in consequence sentenced to six months hard labor on Okalla prison farm. He had previously been released from prison that summer after serving six months for obstructing a police officer.

Peter Verigin, who still felt frightened over the agitation for his deportation, now condemned the Sons of Freedom to the Community Dukhobors, and the frugal living hard working Community folk took this opportunity to eject "ringing bells" from their midst. Thus, bands of Sons of Freedom, still believing in Verigin, wandered about the country, preaching, eating raw vegetables and impeding automobile traffic on the highways. More than two hundred of them were arrested on September 21 and taken to Nelson, where they were to be charged with vagrancy. But as the jails of British Columbia were filling up, the authorities herded the men, women and children a few miles south to Porto Rico where they promised to settle down on stump land from which the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood had taken most of the timber.

At this stage the Vancouver *Star* pointed out editorially that Peter Verigin had on several occasions publicly denounced the Sons of Freedom. "He is the supreme and absolute authority in the affairs of the community, directing the policy of its various industries and communal operations. He cheerfully assumes full

responsibility for all the money which flows in the treasury, and this unquestioned authority results from the belief that he is the Lord's anointed.

"Why, then, is this supreme ruler unable to discipline and control the supposedly small band whose unlawful acts he professes to disavow? If Verigin and the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood were sincere, they would put an end to the trouble."

The *Star's* questions were answered with more parades and burnings in British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

The department of the attorney general for Saskatchewan posted reward notices offering \$1,000 for information given to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police which would lead to the conviction of any person or persons who caused destruction by fire of school buildings.

With the coming of the cold rains in the Kootenays and snow on the prairies, parading and schoolhouse burning ceased.

Peter Verigin, accompanied by a choir of young women and a few of his male and female associates of the moment, left for Southern California. In California he would "unite" the few Independent Dukhobors fruit farming there, and bring several thousand Molokans into his fold. But the Americanized Molokans, whose ancestors, like those of the Mennonites, had lived close to the Dukhobors by the Milky Waters River in Russia more than a hundred years before, failed to respond to his orations. And after he had beaten an Independent Dukhobor farmer, thereby estranging himself from the settlement there, he returned to British Columbia, where he informed the faithful that he had tried to save the Molokans and Dukhobors of California, but they had assumed the ways of the Devil, and were lost.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

WHITE HORSE TO MEXICO

TO THE FAITHFUL, Peter Verigin announced they should soon leave Canada forever. "On a white horse," he would lead them to a better land. "There, in that faraway place, everyone will live happily, the days of tribulation will be ended."

The symbolical white horse, on which the "good" Dukhobors were to ride out of Canada, particularly appealed to the Sons of Freedom. The vision grew to such proportions that several dreamed they saw an enormous white horse bounding over the mountains, with all the Dukhobors riding on it, Petushka sitting in front with the Sons of Freedom behind him. It was only a symbol; no horse could be so large, but God had chosen this way to show them they must prepare for the journey to the better land.

Peter, in his orations, reminded them that the "white horse" was an exception to other horses. "His hay and oats are dollars. He is one of those horses who must eat one-dollar bills, two-dollar bills, five-dollar bills and even one-hundred-dollar bills. Those dollars he must have, so that he will not be weak, or I tell you truly I will not be to blame for everyone staying in Canada where they will be caught by the catastrophe which is rushing toward everyone here. In the promised land, money will not be necessary. In Canada, those who are left behind will not be able to use the money they now selfishly hide. All these paper dollars," he pulled a fat roll from his pocket, "will not be worth as much as potato peelings when chaos comes to the banks and the government. I do not have to remind you that not even a pig can keep from starving by eating green pieces of paper that look like grass, yellow pieces of paper that look like ripe grain in the field, nor red pieces of paper that look like carrots."

At the start of the "white horse fund," the Sons of Freedom were the most generous contributors, but long before the fund grew to its maximum of \$500,000, almost all Named Dukhobors had contributed, so as to be on the safe side. To Independents, in some instances, he offered inducements of interest. Community folk, who were supposed to have little or no money, produced

silver and bills which they had hidden away in mattresses and trunk bottoms.

Most of this "white horse money" Peter loaned to the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited, which, since his arrival in Canada, had become more involved in indebtedness. On this money he collected six per cent interest part of which he turned over to Independents who had cannily insisted that their contribution to the fund be a loan. In this manner he became the largest legal creditor of the Community; in fact, became it by loaning to the people their own money.

During the "white horse" campaign, Petushka often referred to "the ninety-nine-year lease." Though he varied the story from time to time, it was like this: When his father, Peter Vasilivich Verigin, was in England on his way to Canada, he interviewed Queen Victoria, who told him the Dukhobors would be allowed to stay in Canada for ninety-nine years, during which period they would "be free from all laws." At the expiration of the ninety-nine-year lease," they would either have to obey all Canadian laws, or leave Canada. Old Peter had not publicly mentioned this promise, as, had he done so, the Empress of Russia would have become jealous of Queen Victoria, and, as a result, Dukhobors, still in Siberian exile, would have been persecuted.

A slight variation of the story was the "letter from Queen Victoria in England to Peter Vasilivich Verigin in Canada, enclosing the ninety-nine-year lease of freedom from all laws."

"I have that very letter written to my father. It is safely in my archives," Peter Petrovich Verigin declared on one occasion when he was visiting in the farmhouse of an Independent Dukhobor of Blaine Lake district. It was then that he said he had just received a letter from Ramsay MacDonald, asking his (Verigin's) advice concerning British foreign policy.

Early in January of 1930, from Brilliant, Peter sent telegrams to his key followers in Saskatchewan commanding them to meet him in Verigin. They were all there when he arrived, the nervously expectant Cazakoff, the fat Mahonin and others from the old Thunder Hill colony. In one of his most pleasant moods, he decreed they should call a convention to make plans for an exodus to Mexico.

"Dukhobors have been in Canada forty years, and that is too long. We will not wait for the end of the ninety-nine-year lease. We will go to Mexico, where we will all begin a new settlement.

Long enough have we kissed the hindquarters of the Englishmen here."

"What will we do with all the buildings in Canada, and lately we have built so many new ones here?" asked Cazakoff.

"Do you think we can put wings on them and fly them to Mexico?" returned Peter. "No matter about the buildings; sell them, give them away to the poor."

"Well," offered Bonderoff, "Mexico is a warm country, a different place, and different buildings would be needed there, not as expensive as in Canada."

After several lewd jokes, he became emphatic, flourished his fists, banged the table top, and commanded his commissars to attend a convention in Canora, on January 10.

At Canora, he passed a resolution that all Named Dukhobors should migrate to Mexico, and he selected the delegates who would go first to examine the land.

"Gabriel Verashagin will represent the Community, also Niki-for Kootnekoff. Savely Churnoff will be my personal representative. Nikito Popoff, Vasili Novokshonoff, and Peter Kaminoff will represent the Independents." The Sons of Freedom were not to be represented.

Gabriel Verashagin, he who had journeyed to Russia to fetch Petushka to Canada, was pleased with another far-off commission. Nikito Popoff was not enthusiastic. He had two sons in the university at Saskatoon; Bill who would graduate as a civil engineer, John who would become a dentist, and Paul was to enter next year. Besides he had almost 2,000 acres of land free of indebtedness, good machinery and \$10,000 in the bank. "I cannot think Canada is such a bad country to live in," said Nikito. "I do not know why I should go to Mexico, and it is possible that I would not go there."

There was uncomfortable silence. Someone coughed uneasily. Bonderoff turned his head slowly from one side to the other, and out of the corners of his eyes saw that Nikito had spoken for most of the Independents.

Verigin jumped to his feet. "Who said anything about better land? Who said anything about more money to be made in Mexico? It is for spiritual profits we leave Canada. Forty years have we been here, and the time has come when we should move again to clean our souls. We are the Israelites, the wanderers. We are not the Pharisees and Scribes. It is not because I want you to go, but when God tells me the time has come, I must tell you. If

I did not, I would be worse than a thousand devils with twisted tails."

When he saw that he had failed to arouse enthusiasm in the Independents, he altered his course.

"Pravda, I tell you anyone who says he knows where the Dukhobors will migrate, is nothing but a fool. Anyone who says for certain it is Mexico is a liar; anyone who says it is South America is twice a liar; anyone who says it is Russia is three times a liar; and those who say we will stay here in Canada are liars one hundred times." Sweat trickled down his face, and with such vigor and rhythm did he propound questions and make pronouncements, that most of the audience fell under the spell as they had so often done before. Knowing that Nikito Popoff favored a degree of democracy in reaching decisions, he suggested a meeting in the morning, when all proposals would be discussed and decided upon.

He exploded only once during the next day and it was agreed unanimously they should seek land in Mexico, though Nikito Popoff and Vasili Novokshonoff would not commit themselves to an unconditional exodus. A long list of instructions was compiled. The representatives to Mexico were to inquire in detail concerning: quality of soil, slope of the land, availability of water, rainfall, temperatures, health of the Mexicans, highway, river, railway and ocean transportation to markets, price of farm products, price of implements and clothing, velocity of winds, cyclones if any, altitudes, timber for building, schools and education. Also, the representatives must be certain to visit their old neighbors of the Milky Waters, the Mennonites, take them Christian greetings and note carefully how they liked the Mexican government. And the Dukhobors must know in advance that they would not be forced to fight in an army.

Early in February 1930, the representatives left Canada for Mexico. Not later than April 1, they were to be in Brilliant where Peter Petrovich Verigin would assemble a great convention to hear their report.

Following Verigin's instructions the delegates went first to St. Paul, Minneapolis, where they met Senator Hackney and Philip Ney. After being entertained by the land promoter and his aide at a dinner where the food was ample and good, the whole party boarded a train for Tampico, near where the first block of acreage, on which Hackney had an option, was situated.

Though Ney, the Russian Jew, and Hackney, the United States

Senator, lauded this area, the Dukhobors found little good about it. There were too many rocks, not enough water, no farmers, "only a few Mexican landlords riding on horses and carrying pistols in their belts; and some men riding on donkeys, and looking like milinki Tartars."

So the party went to the second property nearer Durango. There the wells were only twelve feet deep, and in them was enough water for horses and cattle, but not enough for irrigation. The third real estate prospect in the mountain valleys lacked moisture too, and there were icicles on the water barrels in the mornings.

All these things and more, the Dukhobors noted but they said little to Ney, who explained to Hackney that the Dukhobors were enthusiastic about Mexico, but, being a stolid people, they did not show their emotions. Suddenly, Gabriel Veraschagin, while agreeing with Nikito Popoff that there was not enough rain, became convinced all the Dukhobors should move to Mexico to gain their spiritual freedom.

"How do you expect to have spiritual freedom in a place where Mexicans starve their donkeys and the Mennonites here tell us they wish to return to Canada?" asked Nikito.

"But," said Gabriel, "we are neither Mennonites nor Mexicans."

"Sometimes I think we are worse than donkeys," Nikito said slowly.

Spring was in the air over the emerald river and green hills of the Kootenays when in the last days of March the faithful by hundreds prepared for the great meeting in Brilliant. There was a feeling of excitement, a buoyancy as of spring itself. Within a month they might be leaving Canada forever, going to a far-off country where all would live happily as brothers and sisters. From deep trunks and boxes in every village, women took out their finest silk shawls and best embroidered aprons. They made the blue-serve suits of their menfolk spotless; trimmed the heads of the wondering boys; everywhere smoke rose from the chimneys of the bathhouses.

In Brilliant village, where the meeting was to begin on the morning of March 31, fifty delegates from Saskatchewan arrived in a special railway coach. The representatives had returned from Mexico. Even Senator Hackney, hopeful but puzzled, felt the holiday atmosphere, especially after Verigin assured him any opposition to the Mexican land deal would be overcome.

Soon after sunrise, several thousand filled the courtyard by the

jam factory. Among the waiting Community people, there was an undercurrent of perplexity about why a few hundred Sons of Freedom were there. "Who told them to come? . . . We thought they would not be here. . . . Will they torment us with their antics? What does Petushka think?" Whether Peter Verigin had invited them to the meeting within the shadow of his father's tomb, or whether he had warned them to stay away, was not known.

All who could find standing room squeezed themselves into the meeting hall, while shawled women and bareheaded men stood in a v-shaped wedge, filling the sunlit yard. Inside, on the platform, was the traditional white-clothed table with its loaf of bread, bowl of salt and jug of water. When the psalm in song ended, those who could extricate their handkerchiefs wiped the sweat from their faces. Petushka stepped up on the platform, Bonderoff at his heels.

He greeted the people in the conventional way. Slava Bohu rumbled from their throats, but there was not room to kneel and touch foreheads to the floor. Bonderoff, like a secretary of state, sat with his fountain pen in hand at a table covered with papers.

"Brothers and sisters," began Verigin, sonorously, "on this beautiful day we are gathered here in the Spirit of Christ. Today, great things will be decided; tomorrow yet greater things. Who among us can say it is not so, when our destiny is in the hands of God?"

"The Community people live in communal houses and that is as it should be. The Independents live on separate farms, yet they are still our brothers . . . one great family of Dukhobors faithfully serving Christ.

"Sons of Freedom sometimes show their nakedness as a protest to unchristian civilization, materialism, profiteering, war, and exploitation of other people's labor. There will always be parasites in the world, those who do no good, those who live from the sweat and labor of others. But Dukhobors must never be exploited or exploit anyone. It was not for nothing that I rode the revolutionary horse in Russia and found out all about international politics.

"Some Dukhobors are liars and adulterers, but they are not true Dukhobors. Some Dukhobors are in business for themselves, but they are not Dukhobors. Hypocrites and Pharisees who think they can save themselves by living apart from the brothers, amassing fortunes which will be swept away in the catastrophe rushing toward us. . . .

"New spiritual light is necessary, new land is necessary . . . new faith. If the new land is faraway, what did Christ say? Have faith and everything is possible. Have as much faith as a grain of mustard seed and move a whole mountain." With vigorous correlation of words and gestures he held them.

What he could have made of himself in politics, if only English were his native tongue, thought Senator Hackney, shaking off the momentary conviction that a truly great religious leader was standing on the platform before him. The senator, with Ney on one side and Morris Chutorian on the other, was receiving in whispers choice interpretations of this and that resounding phrase.

"Oh, it is unfortunate today," whispered Ney, his large eyes popping more than usual, "that you, Hackney, cannot understand Russian."

"Yes, you are missing something. I'm telling you," said Chutorian. "Now he's reminding them of the great woman leader in Russia, Lukeria Vasilivna Kalmikova. She . . ."

"Look," wondered Hackney, aloud. "What on earth is that behind him?"

Ney, taking his nose from Hackney's ear, looked up at the platform, and his eyes protruded further than ever. Standing quietly behind Petushka, with arms folded, were three naked women. They had come from behind unnoticed.

"How did they get there, and why are they there?" asked Hackney, still staring in astonishment.

"Shh," Ney whispered. "Say nothing. They might go away again." And his irrepressible humor welling up, he said in Yiddish to Chutorian: "If they should go away just like they came, we can tell Hackney that they were a backdrop, a part of the scenery."

At that moment two naked men and another nude woman joined the others. The entire audience saw them now; Peter detected something too, and his oratory lost some of its power. Bonderoff, who had divided his eyes between the naked ones and Petushka, started in his chair when Verigin, stopping in the middle of a phrase, turned around to see the Sons of Freedom.

"So! This is what you do! Disrupt our peaceful meeting in the Spirit of Christ—Oh, why is it you follow me everywhere to torment me?" he shouted. "You vile reptiles, you snakes in the grass, you sons of bitches! . . ."

As he unleashed a torrent of profanity, more naked ones joined the others, standing there with half-vacuous, half-interested looks on their stolid faces and a gleam of triumph in their eyes.

"You whores and bastards of the black hundreds, you have ruined me!" He turned violently to the audience, ordered it to disperse, and, with the air of a fabulous ringmaster who has just brought the closing act of his circus to an abortive conclusion, stalked from the platform and out of the hall.

There was an anxious buzz of voices. The sons and daughters found their clothes, and dressed. Still astonished, Hackney asked Ney numerous questions. "Why hadn't the other Dukhobors made the fanatic Dukhobors dress before? Why did Verigin walk away like that, dismissing the meeting before it had a chance to hear the report of the representatives to Mexico? . . ."

Ney did his best to console the senator, eventually telling him it was of no consequence, as Mr. Verigin was a very temperamental man, and that such demonstrations temporarily upset him to such an extent he was unable to continue right away with the business. "But everything will be all right. No harm has been done."

From his residence, Peter Verigin sent word that Hackney, Ney, Chutorian, and several others should be his guests for a meal.

Before they sat down to the table, Hackney questioned Verigin, through Ney. Ney, who was being reimbursed by both men, did his best to soften the situation. An open break would mean the finish of his income from that source and the end of his grandiose scheme of migration and real estate which, he hoped, would bring him several hundred thousand dollars.

"The Mexican government will never let those fanatics in," said Hackney, shaking his head and thinking of the money he had spent to promote the exodus.

"Mr. Verigin says you are right, Senator. He knows the Mexican government does not want fanatics. He intends to leave them in Canada."

"But why did he let them come to the meeting? He must have known they were here, and even though he says he has no control over them, he could have told his Community people to keep them away."

As Verigin insisted on having everything translated, Ney's head was turning from side to side, alternate streams of English and Russian issuing from his generous mouth.

"Verigin says that he was not fooled by the Sons of Freedom. He knew they were here. He expected they would torment him. He allowed them to, because it was the best way of reminding the

other Dukhobors what the fanatics are like. Otherwise the Community people and Independents might have become softhearted at the meeting today and invited the mad brothers to accompany them to Mexico. You see, Dukhobors are a very hard-working people, simple and kindly, but they have to be handled carefully, and Mr. Verigin well knows how to do this so it will be best for all of us."

Hackney seemed partly convinced with the logic of this, though he suspected some of it was Ney's. Brightening up a bit, the blueness left his lips. He walked toward Verigin and shook hands.

That evening, Verigin ordered a private conference among the Dukhobor representatives to Mexico and certain of the Named Dukhobor officials. They were to prepare a report which he would receive in the morning. Even the Community representatives were not enthusiastic about Mexico. But while they hedged, hoping not to have to commit themselves, Nikito Popoff and Vasili Novokshonoff, the Independents, spoke out against the scheme. The land was not good; there were too many months of the year without rain; the country looked wild; the Mexicans did not wash often enough. Moreover, they did not trust the Mexican government.

When next morning they appeared before him to give their report, he waved it aside and upbraided them for wasting his time and money.

"All these days you have been here, and I have not yet seen the report? You say it is here now, but how can I believe you? How can I trust you even that much, you whom I sent to Mexico to find land for the toiling people? And now all you can think of is to betray everyone and say the land is not suitable. Is it that you are cheats? You have made a deal with someone to buy the land, knowing that it is the best land in the world, and you are trying to hide that fact from myself and the people? You, delegates? You liars, you saboteurs," he roared.

Attracted by the commotion, Hackney came in with Ney and Chutorian. Verigin abruptly ceased his torrent.

"What was he saying?" asked Hackney of Ney.

"I think he said that some of the delegates were trying to double-cross him. They knew the land was so valuable at that price, they wanted to make a deal on the side," said Ney.

Verigin now ordered the representatives, "Named," and Community officials, to go to the meeting hall where the Mexican report would be given to the people. Word of this spread rapidly

through the courtyard, and in a few minutes the hall was packed; a larger crowd than on the day before assembled outside. The Community people had already heard that their representatives were not enthusiastic about Mexico. The report at the meeting confirmed these rumors, but it did not mean a great deal, for most would follow Petushka anyway. The report, however, kept Ney very busy interpreting it in the best possible light to Hackney.

Peter sent instructions that the Named Dukhobors should elect a central executive committee, and toward the end of this business he appeared at the meeting.

"Go on with the business," he said pleasantly. "I do not wish to interrupt such important proceedings," sitting down on a bench where several had made room for him.

The meeting resumed, hesitantly. John Bonderoff's election as secretary of the Society of Named Dukhobors of Canada, at a salary of \$130 a month and traveling expenses, was confirmed.

Petushka, leaning over to one of the Community men, whispered something in his ear. The man got up and went out of the hall.

A few minutes later, about twelve well-known Sons of Freedom, men and women, with their clothes on, entered the hall and stood facing Verigin.

He glowered at them.

No one was paying attention to the business now; all eyes were on Petushka and the sons and daughters. There was silence. Then, without taking his yellow-gray eyes from the little group, he stood up.

"Why are you here to torment me?" he asked the Sons of Freedom.

"We are not here to torment anyone. We come with a message of brotherly and sisterly love," answered amber-bearded Ivan.

"When I do not want your messages, why do you insist on using force to make me accept them?" reiterated Verigin in a low-pitched and even tone.

"We do not believe in force, but are we our brother's keeper?" asked one of the women.

"It is not possible to answer one question with another," said Verigin, adding that "only a clucking hen would do that."

"It is not possible to say whether the hen came before the egg or not. Even the greatest scientists have not found out such things," retorted one of them.

This baffling conversation continued, to the intense interest of

everyone in the crowded hall and the audience outside which filled the doorways and pressed closer to the windows. In the intervals between questions and answers, there were no sounds other than Ney's whispered translations to Hackney, and an occasional shuffling of a foot when Verigin propounded an especially difficult conundrum.

"What do you mean when you say that private property should be abolished?" he asked.

"All ownership of property should be abolished, and no one must exploit the labor of another on the land. There should be no rent, no taxes, no—"

"But we must pay for the land and pay the taxes so we can grow food to feed you who will pay no taxes or rent. In this way you use force on the Community people."

"We do not look on it as force, dear Petushka. We love you, and we wish to help the Community people to see the light. We are the ringing bells, the scouts on the hilltops, clearing the way for true freedom."

"What kind of freedom is it when you take off your clothes and force us to look at you in your nakedness?" he asked sharply.

There was a pause fraught with impending danger.

"Skoro, quickly," Verigin commanded impatiently, "tell me!"

Two began answering at once. "It is not right," Vasili said, "that we should try to hide anything, not even our bodies. God made our bodies, and he sees through the clothes of every man and woman. When we undress in public we are helping our brothers and sisters destroy false feelings of shame."

"And so we are fulfilling God's law," added another.

"But I tell you more than one hundred times that we do not want your help," Verigin raised his voice. "We ask you to go away and give us our freedom," he shouted. "You tormentors, provocateurs, foul vipers and bastards." He stepped closer to them.

"You are losing your temper and cursing. That is wrong. But we are turning our other ear . . ."

Whatever else Ivan had to say was drowned by a torrent of profanity from Verigin who, dancing like an enraged genie, swung his fists, flailing the sons left and right.

They stood there, some trying to shield themselves from his heavy blows.

A trembling woman shrieked, "Christ said, 'Turn the other cheek.'"

Dunia, his old mother, who had seen it all from the beginning, shouted at him to stop.

Mahonin tried to intervene. "Please, please Petushka they are punished enough now."

But Petushka answered the elephantine Mahonin by hitting him so hard that he fell backwards over a bench.

Some of the spectators now pushed their way through front and back doors, a few climbing out of the windows. But the hall seemed as congested as ever, fresh Sons of Freedom appearing from somewhere and standing in front of Petushka in his wrath.

Still more Sons of Freedom came, until Peter was confronted with almost a hundred. Those who had received a few blows retired to the center of the assemblage, and unscathed ones passively presented themselves.

Sweat dripping from his red face, lungs working like bellows, Verigin was becoming exhausted, and two young Community men stepped forward to help him. The Community "huskies" hit the martyrs, but seeing this had small effect, they picked up one son and thrust him through the nearest window. More Community men joined the melee, pushing the Sons of Freedom to the doorways, pulling stubborn ones along by their beards. Still no Son of Freedom struck back.

Outside, in the midst of the milling courtyard, the bull-like roars of Peter Verigin now rose above the noise of scuffling feet and crying women.

"Chase them away forever," he shrieked. "Throw the foul vipers over the fence."

The Community men in action, now outnumbering the passive Sons of Freedom, lifted them over the brick wall between the jam factory and the railway track. Within twenty minutes, a few hundred Sons of Freedom, men and women, all who had been in the courtyard, were standing in a disheveled group on the railway track. There was a defiant pride about most of them, as, singing a mournful hymn, they walked slowly down the track.

From the people in the courtyard came loud sobbing and penitent remarks.

"Oh, it is terrible," wailed a woman, her eyes red-rimmed with crying. "And we are all supposed to be brothers and sisters in Christ!"

"But what could be done?" shrugged Nekefor, her husband. "Is it right they should always take their clothes off in public, always argue, always make trouble?"

"Well," said a Grand Forks man in a troubled voice, "they are not right, but I do not think our people should treat them so. It is not right to use force." There were tears in his eyes, and he looked faint and miserable.

Verigin had disappeared, leaving the people standing around in dejected knots. The vanquished sons and daughters had passed out of sight down the railway track, but waves of their melancholy hymn floated back to the courtyard.

Hackney, thoroughly amazed, listened to Ney's explanations, as both men searched for Verigin. They found him in his residence, sitting at a table with his head in his hands, bemoaning the heavy task allotted him by God.

"I, Chestiakov, the purger. It all hurts me more than it could possibly hurt the Sons of Freedom," he said. "But now it is done, everything will be all right. They will bother us no more. They will stay in Canada while we will go to Mexico."

Half-pleased, half-doubting, Hackney shook hands with Verigin and hoped for the best for his real estate deal.

There was a knock at the door. Bonderoff, Mahonin and two or three more Named Dukhobor officials bowed their way in. They had come to inform Petushka that the people were feeling very sad.

"It is always the same, they bring their trouble to me," Verigin sighed. "I have so many worries now that I suppose I can stand one more. Tell them to assemble for a meeting and in ten minutes I will speak to them."

Word of another meeting spread among the people. They formed themselves without enthusiasm into the conventional v. Verigin kept them waiting only a quarter of an hour. In deep, soothing tones he reminded them of the mysterious ways of God, the trials and tribulations which beset the true pathway of all good Christians. With tears in his eyes he said how sorry he was to have to do certain tasks. In Caucasia once he had had a beautiful saddle horse. One day that horse ate too much grain and swelled up bigger than a water buffalo.

"I knew my good horse might swell and swell until the wind from the grain inside him would press on his heart and he would die. What to do? Sorrowfully, but with firm hand, I made a hole in him with a sharp instrument. The wind blew out of his belly. His body shrank to the proper size and always afterwards he thanked me.

"Yet we know grain is very good for a horse in a physical way,

just as ideas are very good for humans in a spiritual way. But when too many ideas ferment in the heads of men and women, it becomes sadly necessary to knock those heads together."

Already, faces and spirits of the faithful were uplifted. And when, after more parables, and quotations from the New Testament, he declared a holiday of two weeks for everyone, their hearts were filled with joy. He would pay all the expenses. All the Community trucks and automobiles would be at the disposal of his guests. There would be visiting, singing, picnics and meetings throughout Brilliant and Grand Forks colonies.

Next morning, with Petushka leading the procession in the Community's newest automobile, the happy throng left Brilliant and moved westward along the highway to Prekrasnia village, ten miles away. There were about twenty cars and fifteen trucks, followed by horse-drawn vehicles, behind which walked a few hundred men.

With Verigin in the leading car, rode Senator Hackney, Ney and Morris Chutorian. Happy hymns rose from the cavalcade as it wound its way slowly along the mountain road. At Prekrasnia there was more singing, and much eating.

The holiday, which consisted of visiting one village after another, ended before the expiration of the time allotted. The crowd had dwindled to a few hundred by the end of the first week, probably due to Peter's absence from gatherings and the innate industry of the Community and Independent people.

Verigin visited Independent Dukhobors of the kind who, while not believing in him, enjoyed his profane artistry and with whom he could freely drink whisky, smoke cigarettes and eat meat, with embarrassment to no one. The Hackney party left for the East, Hackney returning to the United States, where he launched the International Colonization Corporation and later sold shares in the Dukhobor-Mexican real estate scheme.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

FIRE FANATICS

BUT THE SONS OF FREEDOM continued in their restlessness. On June 16, a band left Porto Rico, with the intention of entering the United States to search for the promised land. Turned back at the border town of Tadanac, they trekked north, and led by Paul Vatin, disappeared into the mountains west of Nelson.

Scattered outbreaks of nudity continued in the Kootenays, and the British Columbia provincial police, at a loss to know how to stop them, ordered itching powder of the kind advertised in novelty and "play a joke on your friends" catalogues. When on June 22, fifteen men and women undressed in the presence of Constable Ralph Macintosh—they had been excluded from a Community meeting in Brilliant—the constable experimented with it. Rubber gloves on his hands, he dusted powder on them. They stood motionless, arms folded, watching him, but saying nothing. Scripnikoff, the Ukrainian convert to the Sons of Freedom, stood stolidly with his wife and twenty-four-year-old daughter. The last in the line was a thin middle-aged woman with pancake-like breasts. When Macintosh applied the finely ground powder to her, she suddenly unfolded her arms, hit his hand, and sent a shower of powder down his neck. Some of those first sprayed were reluctantly scratching themselves, and Macintosh, who knew Russian, heard them talking of "Satan's tricks." "It wasn't a great success," he afterwards remarked laconically, and the experiment was not repeated.

Outbreaks of incendiarism began next. Sawmills and schools mysteriously burned to the ground; a brick schoolhouse was partly demolished by dynamite. Sons of Freedom were suspected, but police were unable to apprehend them. Community Dukhobors, posted as guards around the buildings, either were unable to identify the culprits, or, in their traditional antipathy towards policemen and soldiers, would not do so. Verigin, accusing the police of incompetence, appealed to the government for protection for the Community's property.

In November, Verigin received another \$2,000 with a letter from Hackney. The money, the senator said, was to help defray the expenses of another delegation to examine land in Mexico.

On February 8, 1931, Morris Chutorian, in a letter to Verigin, said that he had arranged for one hundred Jewish families to settle near the Dukhobors in Mexico. Verigin replied that he was pleased the Jews and the Dukhobors would be neighbors, and added that he required a further \$3,000 from Senator Hackney in order to send a delegation of Dukhobors to Berlin, in connection with the release of 10,000 "Named Dukhobors" from Russia. They, too, wished to emigrate to Mexico, but arrangements must be made with the Soviet government. Hackney, still selling shares in his Mexican scheme, wrote that he would send \$3,000 within a few days.

In Brilliant, about one o'clock in the morning of April 24, a detonation awakened the sleeping village. The villagers, dressing hurriedly, went with lanterns to find Peter Verigin's tomb torn by explosive. The superstructure was shattered, the two marble pillars, the two white marble doves of peace and the sheaves of wheat, lay in a broken heap. A fragment of marble had hurtled through a window of a building eighty feet away. When the police arrived from Nelson they said dynamite had been used. Stroigoff, the Dukhobor guard who had left the tomb at midnight, admitted that six weeks previously, six sticks of dynamite had been found in the tomb.

While the police searched for the perpetrators, Dukhobors gossiped that the government may have blown up old Peter's tomb, "just like they blew him up in the railway coach."

On June 20, Paul Vatin, the Son of Freedom, was arrested again. He had refused to give information to the census taker. "I have no name," he told Eli Kidd, the enumerator. "I am a son of God, and as such, a name is not necessary. I have no age because I am an eternal son of God, and years do not count in God's eternity." Vatin was sentenced to three months on Okalla prison farm.

Five more schoolhouses had been burned to the ground in the Dukhobor districts of Saskatchewan, and two others set on fire in May.

In Blaine Lake district, about 5:30 on a Sunday morning, November 15, Frank Steger's wife shouted frantically to her husband, "Frank, get up! Everything is light outside, and the house is burning."

Peter Dyck, their hired man, a Mennonite, was first outside. The Steger farmhouse, however, was not on fire, but the schoolhouse, a few yards away, was a mass of flames. A general telephone ring brought neighboring Independent Dukhobors to the fire. Bill Kabaroff, chairman of the River Hill School Board, and several others arrived within fifteen or twenty minutes, but the school was too far gone to save.

Light snow had fallen during the night, and footprints showed, leading north from the school. Dyck observed that whoever had made them had tried to step in the same tracks when he retreated. He and Kabaroff followed the tracks to Perehudoff's gate, where there were horse tracks in the snow as well. It looked as if a horse had been tied to the fence, and that the man who made the footprints had mounted the horse and ridden away at a gallop.

The trackers borrowed a flashlight from Perehudoff and followed the horse tracks. When they had gone about a mile from the burning school, they met Max and Peter Stupnikoff in a car. The Stupnikoff boys agreed to participate in following the tracks. Dyck lay on one fender and Kabaroff on the other, the better to see the tracks.

The trail led to Eli Podovnikoff's yard, where it was lost among many hoof marks. There was a light in Podovnikoff's house. They had to knock four times before there was an answer, in a woman's thin voice. Eli Podovnikoff's wife looked frightened and nervous.

"What's the matter?" asked one of her sons in English.

"The school burned down," Kabaroff said.

"Oh, that's too bad. When did it happen?"

"Just half an hour ago," Kabaroff answered.

"We followed a man's tracks and then horse tracks from the school to your yard," added Dyck, and asked if they could see everyone's boots or rubbers.

"Sure," Peter Podovnikoff answered. "Come upstairs."

They followed him to where his brother Joe sat up in bed, rubbing his eyes as if he had just awakened from a long sleep.

"What are you looking for?" asked Joe. He was admittedly a Son of Freedom, and had been to British Columbia that year.

"We want to look at your rubbers," said Dyck.

The rubbers were wet, and Pete's moccasins had unmelted snow and damp manure on them, and he admitted he had been out of the house that morning.

When the searchers left the Podovnikoff house, they followed

tracks leading across the field to Stupnikoff's. Then they returned to the site of the schoolhouse and waited for the police, who, continuing the investigation, arrested the two Podovnikoff boys, Joe and Pete, and Bill Stupnikoff.

At the trial in King's Bench Court, Prince Albert, in 1932, Pete Podovnikoff was freed, but Joe Podovnikoff and Bill Stupnikoff were adjudged guilty, though they both pleaded not guilty, were represented by counsel, and refused to testify in court. The evidence was circumstantial.

Chief Justice Brown, in passing sentence, referred to twenty-five schoolhouses having been burned in Dukhobor districts in Saskatchewan during the last three years.

"You have been found guilty of burning down the schoolhouse in your community, by twelve of your fellow citizens," said Judge Brown. "I have had Dukhobor schoolteachers and a Dukhobor lawyer before me as witnesses, and I have found them very intelligent. Your action is not inherent in Dukhobor nationality. But a number of your people, I unfortunately have to conclude, are capable of endeavoring to destroy the institution that would enlighten you. One marvels at the futility; one wonders you do not realize that from the ashes of every schoolhouse a better schoolhouse arises. . . . The sentence of the court is that you, Bill, be imprisoned in Saskatchewan Penitentiary for a term of two years, and you, Joe, be imprisoned for four years."

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

PERJURY AND PIERS ISLAND

IN FEBRUARY 1932, Verigin went to Winnipeg where he met Hackney, arrived from St. Paul. Again, reports of huge land deals and Dukhobor migrations were printed in the newspapers. Negotiations were under way, Verigin told the Canadian Press on March 2, to settle 50,000 Dukhobors from Europe on 1,000,000 acres of land in Colombia, South America. J. M. Hackney was negotiating for this land on their behalf. In Winnipeg, Dukhobor officials and agents were in conference with delegates from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Turkey and other countries.

Verigin was invariably entertained by newspaper stories such as these. As an interpreter read them aloud, he sat with half-closed eyes, shoulders shaking with laughter at the many fools believing his statements. On occasions, in frenzied conviction, he believed his fabrications. In one interview, he told newspaper reporters that, far from having any intention of leaving Canada, he was purchasing additional land, building more grain elevators for the people and developing water power in Dukhobor settlements. The facts were, however, that grain elevators in Dukhobor districts were being burned to the ground; that recently the Community elevator and mill at Verigin had mysteriously gone up in smoke, and the faithful Dukhobors of Saskatchewan and elsewhere were still using kerosene lamps. Cazakoff, that painstakingly careful bookkeeper, computed the Community fire loss, for the year 1932, at \$335,143.12.

The economic depression, which in 1932 lay heavily over the North American continent, reduced the Community's income from grain, fruit, vegetables, jam, lumber and wage labor. Diminished returns, Verigin's chaotic direction of affairs, his personal extravagance, and the increasing nonproduction of the Sons of Freedom, combined to put the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited in the most precarious financial position since its inception. Even the business diligence of Cazakoff, Shukin, and other officials could not offset the general economic inanity. For wheat that year was to bring the lowest price since

sod had first been turned on the prairies; and fruit from the fertile valleys of British Columbia was to be dumped in the Fraser River.

Verigin, as if unconsciously parodying the economic travesty, continued to drain the Dukhobor treasury for anything from speculation in the wheat market to gambling at cards, all the while urging his followers to work harder and live yet more frugally.

Recently he had developed a liking for lawsuits. At his command, in 1932, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited had sued George Chutskoff, once a Community member, who had received legal title to his farm. But Verigin insisted that Chutskoff still owed \$1,000 to the Community, and that he had inadvertently been given the title without having paid this amount.

Chutskoff's lawyer, in Yorkton Court House, was certain that his client had paid everything, and the reason that the full amount could not be accounted for on paper was simply that Chutskoff had paid a sum to Verigin in cash. Verigin, in turn, said that such a thing was impossible. How could he have received money from Chutskoff when he, Verigin, was not even in Saskatchewan? He declared that, from July, 1928, to March, 1929, he had lived continuously in Brilliant, British Columbia. Chief Justice Brown, the same judge who sentenced the two Sons of Freedom found guilty of burning River Hill schoolhouse, gave judgment in favor of Chutskoff. Thus Verigin lost the lawsuit.

But Verigin, who was ever being advised to enter lawsuits, laid information for perjury against Chutskoff, in January, 1932. Verigin accused Chutskoff of having perjured himself in court, and insisted that he owed the \$1,000 to the toiling people. Chutskoff was arrested, released on bail, and ordered to appear at the May sittings of court in Yorkton.

This was the beginning. Someone laid information against Verigin in connection with the first Chutskoff case. Thus, Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested Peter Verigin on a charge of attempting unlawfully to dissuade Vasili Konkin from giving evidence in the original Community suit against Chutskoff. Peter Kobnotoff, a Community member and uncle of Konkin, slashed his throat with a razor, thereby making himself unable to appear as a witness.

Further complicating proceedings for the nonlegal mind, J. A. M. Patrick, K. C., Yorkton lawyer, first undertook to defend Chutskoff at the preliminary hearing, then switched to the defense of Verigin. The upshot of these mad-hatter proceedings

was curious. At the final hearings of both cases in King's Bench Court, Chutskoff was found not guilty of perjury; Peter Verigin was found guilty of perjury. He was duly sentenced to three years imprisonment in Saskatchewan Penitentiary at Prince Albert.

The several hundred faithful, who had waited in Yorkton for the outcome of the trial, returned to their farms, there to talk of the terrible way the Canadian government was persecuting their leader. Even in Blaine Lake district, Independents met to consider turning their horses and cattle loose and abandoning their farms, if the government would not release their leader.

His imprisonment was followed by numerous "persecution" tales in British Columbia, which added to the economic and spiritual confusion among the Dukhobors there. Besides, it was spring, a season of restlessness and inspiration, and the combination of factors proved too much for hundreds of Sons of Freedom who had been ejected from, or who had voluntarily left, Community lands. Before the end of April, they began converging on the village of Thrums, three miles west of Brilliant. In an orchard gay with blossoms they held mournful meetings, talked of the promised land, God, and Peter Verigin. On a sunny day in early May, a hundred men and women disrobed beneath the apple trees. They were arrested and taken to Nelson for trial. On the following Sunday, more than one hundred others undressed in protest of the arrest of their brothers and sisters. This second group was promptly arrested and taken in trucks to Nelson.

Attorney General R. H. Pooley announced he was prepared to arrest five or six thousand Dukhobors, if necessary. "We are determined to settle the Dukhobor problem once and for all, and if imprisonment is the only means of ending the long series of outrages, we will adopt it," he declared.

On May 15, two hundred and fifty-four more men and women were arrested for appearing nude in the orchard. There were five hundred and eleven adults living in tents and temporary buildings surrounded by a barbwire enclosure in Nelson jailyard. Two hundred and forty-seven had been sentenced to three years in penitentiary; the remainder awaited trial; still more Dukhobors undressed and were brought to prison.

The case of Dasha Repin was interesting; she was a bright young waitress in the Proctor Hotel, forty miles from Thrums. Efficient at her work, well regarded by the management and guests, she suddenly left her work, undressed with the others, was arrested and sentenced to three years. Another case was that of a young

man who had the day before bought a car. He was driving along the highway near Thrums when he saw a nude band of Sons of Freedom in an orchard. He joined them, undressed, and was arrested.

Throughout the wholesale trials, when Illarion Spielmans, court interpreter, made the charge of being nude known to the prisoners, nearly all answered "Pravda" (true), thereby pleading guilty; but many added that they had only broken a man-made law—not God's law. One old lady insisted she had not been naked, she was "married to Christ," had "worn the bridal clothes."

Nelson town was filled with Community Dukhobors not under arrest who talked of leaving Canada forever, bemoaned the persecution of Petushka and "our brothers and sisters."

Though both husbands and wives had, in the majority of cases of married men and women sentenced, appeared nude simultaneously or soon afterwards, there were instances of only a husband having done so, or only a wife. Among several women heavy with child was Jean Zarubin who, taken from the Nelson prison camp to Kootenay Lake General Hospital on May 19, on the day following gave birth to a son. Similarly, to Fannie Storgoff a daughter, Mary, was born.

During the latter half of May, nude men and women were arrested in two's and three's, taken to Nelson and sentenced to three years each. Early in June, a group of sixty-nine undressed, were arrested and sentenced. In the barbwire enclosure at Nelson, however, the prisoners did not attempt to undress.

Now what was to be done? There was not enough accommodation for the six hundred adults in the British Columbia Penitentiary at New Westminster, with the result that they became a problem for the Federal department of justice. The children who had appeared nude, and the children of parents sentenced, presented another problem. There were three hundred and six, ranging in age from one year to seventeen years. The authorities left suckling babes with their mothers; small children were sent to homes and orphanages on the Pacific coast, while the older boys were taken to the Boys' Industrial School at Coquitlan. The men and women were loaded in Canadian Pacific Railway coaches and transported five hundred miles west to Okalla prison farm, at Vancouver. Here, women were housed in one wing of the prison, while the men were placed in another.

Only a few of the leaders, Paul Vatin, Peter Maloff, and several other zealots were confined in cells. The great majority

slept on a sea of mattresses covering the floors of the two dormitories. With their coming, the prison became overcrowded. Consequently, the authorities procured Piers Island, a small island in the Pacific, two miles off Sidney, Vancouver Island.

In August the buildings of Piers Island Penitentiary were begun. Barbwire twenty feet in height was strung around the two enclosures. Dormitories, dining halls, kitchens and washrooms were built of shiplap and tar paper, in each of the two compounds. In the dormitories two rows of double bunks were built.

There was one entrance to the men's compound, and one to the women's; each consisted of wooden gates reinforced with steel mesh, wide enough for a motor truck to enter, and opened by a lever, which a guard operated from a platform above.

On a November evening, 1932, in a dusk, grayer than the paint on the penitentiary buildings, the *S. S. Princess Mary* brought the first group of thirty women to their island prison. It was damp and cold in the dormitory, because there was no firewood. Some thirty men prisoners, who had preceded the women, had refused to cut firewood, "because we will not do the work of the government." More prisoners of both sexes arrived, and still the men refused to cut firewood. Throughout raw nights they trotted back and forth to keep warm. Gradually however, one dormitory after another surrendered, and the men cut wood for the stoves.

Next they refused to carry their vegetables up from the wharf, again saying they would not do the work of the government.

Warden Cooper, who was in charge of the new Piers Island Penitentiary, was almost as passive as were the Sons of Freedom. Should a guard strike one of the prisoners, he should be dismissed instantly, the warden ordered.

"Many of these people are anxious to become martyrs," Warden Cooper told his staff. "Some of them would welcome the sort of a lashing their fathers and mothers received from the Cossacks in Russia. We are not going to accommodate them to that extent. Just tell them that if they want to eat they can carry their food up from the wharf and prepare it in accord with prison discipline, or they may leave it where it is and go hungry."

After the stubborn sons had eaten the last of their oatmeal and water, they asked the guards to escort them to the wharf, so that they could carry their vegetables to the kitchens.

In other ways the "battle" of passive resistance went on monotonously from week to week throughout the rainy, foggy winter. At first the women objected to washing their clothes in the great

washroom of the women's compound. But, assured that it was their privilege to be dirty if they wished, their traditional Dukhobor cleanliness overcame their obstinacy, and soon the four dormitories were vying with one another for permission to use the washroom. Each dormitory was allowed exclusive use of the washroom one day a week, and many tales were invented for obtaining it oftener. A heated tank supplied water for the ten showers and thirty tubs. Avoiding the showers at first, the women preferred to bathe in the tubs, and it was while bathing and drubbing at their washboards that they sang their happiest hymns. Most of the sons, on their arrival, had beards in various stages of growth, and hair that had not been cut for months. They allowed themselves to be sheared like sheep.

Prison routine, with more than ordinary privileges, was similar in both compounds. The day began at 6:30 in the morning, when "kitchen gangs" of fifteen to twenty were admitted to the kitchens. They arranged their own kitchen gangs, changing them every four days; and they arranged their own menus from the prison stores.

Borsch invariably for breakfast; raw vegetables at every meal, cabbage finely shredded, carrots, onions and potatoes. A few zealots, stubbornly refusing to eat cooked food, upbraided the less conscientious brothers and sisters who did. There were plenty of dried fruits, apples, prunes, apricots and raisins. There was so much to eat, and so little work, that some suffered from indigestion.

Once a week Doctor Watson came from "King's Hospital," Duncan. Though they had so often declared themselves against doctors and medicine, many of the sons and daughters stood in line to see him, some of them because they had not enough to occupy themselves. It was a rule of the penitentiary that no request to see the doctor be disallowed, and thus the sick parade was a long one. The doctor found diagnosis difficult, and medical history hard to obtain, because the patients insisted on asking him endless questions, and previous ailments were invariably attributed to imprisonment and "harsh persecution." The prison matrons observed that those who were really ill were often the last to ask permission to see the doctor; while about twenty zealous women adhered to their code of having nothing to do with a medical practitioner.

When the women were first given blue and white striped cotton from which they were to sew regulation prison uniforms for

themselves, they refused to touch this "government cloth." But as their own clothes wore thinner, their fingers itched for the needles they so well knew how to use, and they overcame their antipathy toward "sewing for the government." Occasionally some would strip off their clothes and appear triumphantly in "God's uniform," but as this practice had little effect on the prison matrons, it was discontinued.

Warden Cooper set a day in the spring on which every woman was to be in her uniform. On that day, when the women were in the dining hall, the matrons removed what remained of extra clothing. When the women returned to their dormitories, some accused the matrons of thievery; a few sobbed; others pretended not to mind. The next week they were gradually getting into their uniforms, though there was much opposition. Within six months from the time the daughters set foot on their island prison, all were dressed in regulation penitentiary blouse and full, gathered skirt. To these drab but trimly fitted dresses, many added small frills which they made by unraveling pieces of leftover cloth, carefully tying together the threads and crocheting lace for collar and cuffs.

From pieces of wire they manufactured knitting needles, and knitted from string and unraveled flour sacks salvaged from the kitchen. Later they were allowed to have needles and thread from their baggage which, during the first six months, was kept from them. From sugar sacks they fashioned head shawls. From colored labels of tomato cans, they made paper flowers. Prune stones were saved for fortunetelling; and several old ladies specialized in incantations for the sick.

Often they felt lonely for their children, as even the smallest babies had been taken from their mothers at Okalla Prison and put in homes. On days when a wave of despair for the absent children ran through the dormitories, the compound was filled with melancholy psalms. Yet, when two pregnant women were told that they were to be sent back to their villages there to give birth to their babies, they protested they did not want to leave their sisters in prison.

When the Sons refused to submit to discipline, and, in consequence, were put on a bread-and-water diet, they compensated themselves by believing they were "suffering for Christ." What was happening in the men's compound was soon known to the women, and vice versa. Each side gave information to the other

by singing hymns with specially prepared words. Thus when privileges were curtailed in the men's compound, the women wailed and screamed in unison, and were sometimes joined by their menfolk. This occasional yammering of six hundred men and women having lungs well developed by generations of singing, was the hardest thing for the guards and matrons to bear. Only by seeming not to mind, could they discourage the prisoners from it.

There were no attempts at escape when prisoners on good behavior were taken for walks by their guards. Once when Mary Zarusky, the Ukrainian matron who spoke Russian, was conducting a walking party of women, a small green garter snake came wiggling through the grass. Tanya Chernenkova, forty-year-old and stout-built prisoner ran after the harmless snake. Picking it up, she held it by the tail in one hand and the head in the other, eyeing Mrs. Zarusky and remarking what a nice animal it was.

"You education people," said Tanya in English, "you civilized people, you would kill the little snake. But we know he is nice and he knows we would not kill him. Jesus put him here to live with us a peaceful life."

"If you really mean that you do not wish to kill anything," asked Mary Zarusky, sternly, "why do you people put dynamite on the railway tracks?"

"How do you know we put dynamite on the railway tracks?" Tanya replied, still holding the snake which wriggled uncomfortably.

"How do I know you burn schoolhouses also?" Mary Zarusky asked.

"How do you know?" echoed another woman, in Russian. "It is not true, ne pravda."

"I'll report you to Cooper," said Nastia Novakshonova. "The Warden Cooper will fire you for saying these things."

Tanya put the snake back in the grass and they all began talking about persecution, "Ukrainian spies," and the many burdens which civilization had thrust upon them.

Dora Perehudova, "big Dora," refused to kill flies when the nurse handed her a fly swatter in the hospital. "It is wrong to kill," she said. But the week before she had eaten chicken soup with relish, "because it is right to obey the doctor."

Quibbling went on unceasingly, and so often did both guards

and matrons hear the Russian word "nyet" (no), that they referred to their prisoners as "nits." The daughters returned the compliment by calling the matrons "suka" (bitches).

Every day but Sunday was washday, and they liked to hang their laundry on the barbwire fence, instead of in the dormitories, as was required by regulations. One day in the summer of 1933, when a section of the fence fluttered with women's underclothes, Deputy Warden Louis Goss sent for Lillian Stevenson, the head matron, and ordered her to have the clothes taken off the barbwire immediately.

Mrs. Stevenson, short, blond and active, passed on the order to Bertha Bourne, who, with several more of the twelve matrons, began the tiresome and ever-recurring task of argument and persuasion. Big Dora wanted to know, "Where does he want us to hang them when already there are not enough clotheslines inside?"

"The orders are to take down those clothes," insisted Mrs. Bourne.

"Why should it be necessary to hang clothes to dry inside a house in the summer?" asked Dasha Repin, the rose-complexioned waitress from the Proctor Hotel, who had become one of the most persistently stubborn young women on the island prison.

Amidst much muttering, sighs, and many "nyets," they reluctantly carried their pink and blue striped underclothing into the dormitories. But there was no yammering. All was quiet that night when the deputy warden boarded the boat for Vancouver Island. The one sentry paced the walk above the compound gates, and the bright white rows of Coleman gas lamps reflected yellow in the oily sea.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

DEPORTATION FIASCO

THE FAITHFUL SENT PETITIONS to government officials in provincial capitals, and to Ottawa, asking that Peter Verigin be released from prison. In this, they enlisted the aid of churchmen, politicians, and other influential persons in Canada and other countries. "Persecution" stories echoed again in the journals of distant lands. The government of Turkey was one of those notified of Peter's plight.

Saskatchewan University's president, Walter C. Murray, a benign and diplomatic man with a sympathy for Christian minorities, advised Saskatchewan's attorney general that Peter's imprisonment was increasing the leader's influence over the Dukhobors, and in like ratio alienating their sympathy to Canada.

In the meantime, through the tolerance of the authorities, Verigin was permitted to hold a "cabinet" meeting in a visitors' room of Saskatchewan Penitentiary, and thus continue to give personal direction to the affairs of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited and his "Named Dukhobors of Canada and Soviet Russia."

Summoning John Shukin from Brilliant, Michael Cazakoff from Verigin, Peter Morozoff from Yorkton and Sam Reibin from California, Nikito Popoff from Blaine Lake and several lesser of his "ministers" from other points, he prepared a lengthy list of instructions for the August day on which the conference was to be.

Peter Makaroff was also summoned to the "cabinet" meeting. Once more Verigin had retained him as legal counsel, and he had appealed Verigin's case. Though the appeal was not allowed, five judges met in Regina and reduced Verigin's sentence to eighteen months. Now Makaroff was suing J. A. M. Patrick, K. C. (Verigin's Yorkton lawyer), for the \$7,000 which Verigin felt Patrick had overcharged for defending him against the perjury charge that had resulted in his imprisonment.

On the day of the "cabinet" meeting, Wilfrid Eggleston, feature writer for the Toronto *Daily Star*, was in Prince Albert, and he obtained permission to attend, as sort of a one-man press gallery. While Eggleston and Makaroff were waiting the appointed

hour at the entry desk in the penitentiary, Verigin was brought from his cell.

Dressed in prison uniform of khaki cotton smock and trousers, gray collarless shirt, he carried a roll of papers under his arm. He bowed to the lawyer and the newspaperman, and shook hands vigorously with them. He walked briskly into the wire-screened room in such a way that the prison guards escorting him seemed part of his court.

Eggleston looked on with slight amazement. Makaroff put one hand to his face as if erasing a smile. At a nod from the sergeant, the two followed Verigin into the room. With a courteous bow and a wave of his papers, Verigin invited Eggleston to a chair; then, turning to Makaroff, thanked him, in Russian, for coming, and hoped that the vice-presidents of the Community, together with the other officials, would not keep anyone waiting.

While Verigin talked rapidly, Eggleston, who did not understand Russian, observed this man who had been the subject of so many newspaper columns. He has a very sonorous voice and unusually expressive hands, thought Eggleston. Something about his eyes and forehead was reminiscent of Ramsay MacDonald, England's prime minister. Verigin, fixing his gaze on Eggleston, abruptly ceased his flow of Russian.

"Mr. Eggleston, Mr. Verigin would like to tell you what is wrong with the world," Makaroff interpreted.

"Yes, I would be very pleased."

Verigin released a flood of Russian, then stopped, as if he were operated by a stop watch.

"He says," Makaroff translated, "the trouble with the world today is that everyone is following selfish desires. No one cares about the welfare of humanity. It is every man for himself—exploitation, waste, extravagance."

While Makaroff translated, Verigin watched, owl-like, lips moving slightly, as if to count each word and make certain Makaroff neither dropped nor added one.

"The world knows how wrong it is. The world knows that selfishness is at the root of all its unhappiness. But the world is a drunkard," Makaroff continued.

In a deep whisper, leaning close to Eggleston, Verigin said in Russian: "Like a drunken man, the world knows it has sinned, like a drunkard who staggers on and on to the very brink of destruction, who knows, but who persists therein."

At this point his voice rose to a shout.

"Quieten down there," said the desk sergeant, peering through the wire screen.

Verigin looked silently at Eggleston and Makaroff, thrust out his hands and shrugged his shoulders with a gesture of helplessness. His sad eyes seeming brown now, large and deerlike, and a tear, trickling down his cheek, followed the deep line which curved from the base of his nose and disappeared into his mustache.

"The world is nearly as bad as the people riding on it. Some day when it is spinning around, its tire will fall off, then the spokes will come out, then its axle will break, then it will be kaput forever. Slava Bohu." He waved a hand, as if dismissing the topic and the world itself.

"But in the meantime we must attend to practical affairs." He turned to Makaroff. "What are we doing about John Kreuger, the bootlegger?"

John Kreuger, maker of moonshine whisky, was serving a term of six months because he could not pay a \$300 fine. "He is not a Dukhobor, but he is a human being," said Verigin. "I, Chestiakov, being the purger, have to clean his cell." He laughed so loudly at this that the sergeant in charge came ominously close to the wire screen again.

"Poor Kreuger," he continued in subdued voice, "his wife and children are waiting for him on the farm where he made his vodka, and he cannot even go home to harvest his crop. Something in me, possibly it is the voice of God, tells me that I should free the son of a bitch. Why is he not free? Did I not tell you, Makaroff, to telegraph those \$300 to Ottawa?"

"I have sent \$200; that is all I have received for the purpose so far," said Makaroff.

"Oh, those directors of mine! I will see them today and find out how they are wasting the public funds, so there is nothing left to help an honest man. Pravda, the world is very selfish. Why do not you, Makaroff, help other prisoners to get free, even if they cannot pay you?"

"If I helped one today, there would be thousands tomorrow," said Makaroff.

While he was in the midst of exhorting the newspapers to turn away from trivial things, a prison authority came in to announce that the vice-presidents of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood had arrived. Cazakoff, Shukin and the others entered, twisting their caps in their hands and bowing. The "cabinet" session was similar to that of many other conferences, but

there was less profanity and an absence of fisticuffs. Petushka, unrolling his papers, announced that this year was to be the last of the "Five-Year Plan" which he had instituted on his arrival in Canada, and that the time had come to pay all debts owed by the Community.

The debts were to be paid in the following manner: (a) by every salaried official returning all the money he had ever received in wages; (b) by each official responsible reimbursing the treasury for all the financial losses for which he was responsible; and (c) by the receipts of this fall's wheat and fruit harvest.

Impracticable as it all was, the officials listened obediently, and set out for their homes wondering how to carry out the new "orders." Bewildered, too, was Wilfrid Eggleston, who, when they had left the penitentiary, asked a semiskeptical Independent what happened when the leader gave such impossible orders?

"Oh, sometimes they get a beating; sometimes he forgets soon that he has given that order, and they try to keep away from him until they are sure he has forgotten," the man replied.

Denied his usual orations, Peter found an outlet by answering some letters sent to him by the faithful. Amidst much philosophizing and many quotations from the New Testament, he declared that *Verigin* was in prison, not *Chestiakov*. "If Chestiakov did not command Verigin to drink vodka and go to prison, then Verigin would not do these things. But you must know that Chestiakov is all-powerful and all-good, and Chestiakov has a reason for everything; he knows and does what is best for everyone. Everything in the end is arranged for our prosperity, thanks to Jesus Christ who must suffer. All will be well. Slava Bohu."

The faithful, in their letters, bemoaned his persecution, thanked him for suffering for them, asked his advice. . . . "Slava Bohu, Christ has risen. Dearest Petushka, I pray every night for you. I am so sorry your leg is bothering you again. I am sending you five dollars. . . ."

The maids of his many residences in Saskatchewan and British Columbia wrote letters of adoration, hoping soon he would be with them again. To them he replied endearingly, in the "Spirit of Christ," saving his wrath for the officials and bookkeepers.

That fall the wheat yield was fair in the Dukhobor districts of Saskatchewan, but in December the price of wheat fell to the lowest ever recorded in Canada. It was impossible for farmers to pay expenses. The more land an Independent had under cultivation the worse off he was financially. This economic situation,

outside of Dukhobor affairs, had the effect of driving fatalistic Independents closer within the Verigin fold.

Dr. J. T. M. Anderson, Saskatchewan's first Conservative premier in many years, was convinced Verigin was the cause of most of the Dukhobor trouble. This view was shared by the Conservative prime minister, Richard Bedford Bennett. Therefore it was decided that Verigin should be secretly deported to Soviet Russia, in the arbitrary fashion in which "Reds" were being spirited out of Canada at the time.

So, in the last days of January, 1933, when Verigin had completed only nine months of his eighteen-month prison term, two plain-clothes agents from Ottawa arrived in Prince Albert. They presented the penitentiary warden with a mysterious "pardon" and whisked Verigin from jail to the waiting southbound train for Regina.

Verigin, his suit hanging loosely on him, because of the fat he had lost, and the same straw hat on his head that he had when he entered the penitentiary the previous May, remonstrated with his guards, repeatedly asking that he be allowed to see his lawyer. But the agents answered firmly that their orders were to take him to Halifax and allow him to speak with no one, nor would they notify any one of his destination. He slumped down in a seat at the end of the coach, staring moodily out of the window.

The Prince Albert correspondent of the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, Mrs. D. J. Rose, somehow learned he had been taken from the prison and was on his way to the Atlantic seaboard for deportation. She telegraphed Christian Smith, city editor, who telephoned Makaroff at his office.

"That is the first I've heard about it," Makaroff said. "I am amazed they would not notify his counsel."

Makaroff then telephoned Shukin at Brilliant and Cazakoff at Verigin. He telephoned Prime Minister Bennett, and the Honourable Wesley Gordon, minister of immigration, at Ottawa, requesting that Verigin be held in Winnipeg so that he (Makaroff) could see him. But his requests were refused.

He dictated a letter to the attorney general of Saskatchewan suggesting that the procedure adopted to get rid of Verigin was of doubtful legality.

The telephone in Makaroff's office rang once more. It was Shukin, distressed and excited. "Petushka must be saved. He must not be sent away. What will we do without him. Peter, Peter you must save him, no matter how much money it costs."

"I might catch him at Halifax with an airplane," said Makaroff. "But I don't know what I could do there."

"Da, da, hire an airplane and fly to him. It is terrible," said Shukin. "Poor Petushka."

So wrought up over the prospect of losing his benefactor did Shukin become, that he, who had never been in a plane, hurried across the Canadian border to the United States and chartered an airplane for Halifax. Makaroff left Saskatoon on a train to Winnipeg, flying east from there. Sam Reibin, Verigin's personal secretary of the moment, flew with him. They met Shukin in Boston.

"We are ruined." Shukin wrung his hands.

The pilot doubted if they could reach Halifax before the liner, on which Verigin was to be deported, sailed next morning. There was fog along the coast, visibility poor.

Makaroff again telephoned the prime minister, asking that Verigin be held in Canada, at least until the next boat. But he would not reconsider his decision. "That man Verigin is to leave on the *Montcalm* tomorrow morning and no power on earth can stop him," said the prime minister.

Makaroff then telephoned Lionel Ryan, a Halifax lawyer versed in immigration laws. Ryan agreed to do all he could to stay the deportation order. Then, persuading their pilot to risk the weather, the three took off, and reached the ship, still in dock. They found Verigin detained in a room of the Immigration Sheds.

"I do not need your help, Makaroff. I have everything arranged," Verigin said, with a grandiose wave of his hand.

"Very well," replied Makaroff, "I will leave you here." He was almost out of the door, before Verigin pleaded.

"*Poshalosta!* Please! Do not leave me. I was so upset that I did not know what I was saying," he wailed.

"Are you sure?" Makaroff hesitated.

"Yes, yes. I do not want to go to Russia where the Bolsheviki will kill me. Please help me to stay in Canada."

With the Halifax lawyer Makaroff went to the court house, where they procured a writ of habeas corpus, in order that Verigin be produced in court and just cause for his detention be shown. The essence of the lawyers' argument was simple:

Legally speaking, either Verigin had been pardoned, or he was still undergoing sentence. If pardoned, the crime for which he had been sentenced and all its consequences must be wiped out and he should be at liberty. If he had not been pardoned, he should be

in his proper place at Saskatchewan Penitentiary, Prince Albert, not at Halifax. In either case the authorities had no legal right to deport him unless they could show just cause.

To ensure that he would not be bundled aboard either of the two Europe-bound liners under steam in the harbor, the sheriff served both captains with the writ of habeas corpus. Thus, on Saturday morning, both the *Montcalm* and the *Ascania* steamed out of Halifax harbor leaving Verigin behind. Under terms of an order nisi granted by Justice Humphrey Mellish, Verigin was required to appear in supreme court, where immigration authorities were to be given opportunity to show cause for his detention.

C. B. Smith, K. C., counsel for the immigration authorities, had meager information. He knew little other than that Verigin was to be deported. Judge Mellish adjourned the hearing to allow the immigration authorities to obtain further information from Ottawa.

Verigin, back in the Immigration Sheds, wrote a statement for the newspapers and the story was carried across Canada. He urged his followers to be calm "and to continue industriously in your daily activities, just as if I were still among you. Beware of provocators and agitators. Do not follow the example of the foolish Sons of Freedom, provocators who have been banished from our land and with whom we have nothing to do . . ."

Three times he appeared before Judge Mellish, and three times he was taken back to the Immigration Sheds, still awaiting the verdict. Makaroff and Shukin went to Ottawa, but the minister of immigration was still emphatic that Verigin must be deported.

At Halifax on February 26, Judge Mellish gave his verdict: Verigin was to be released from detention; he had been detained unlawfully; he had been pardoned and taken out of penitentiary, but there was no such thing in the law as a pardon for deportation. The embryo Gestapo methods had failed, conspicuously and ignominiously.

The faithful everywhere rejoiced. Verigin took a large room in the Halifax Hotel, ordered whisky and meat. Within twenty-four hours he was feeling his old self again, accusing Shukin of business inefficiency, arguing with Makaroff that his legal fee of \$1,225 was exorbitant.

For several days and nights, he staged one of his fantastic sessions. Community officials, lawyers, newspaper reporters, real estate promoters, curious spectators, eager partakers of food and drink, satellites, favorites of the moment, erstwhile students of

psychology attended his court. Amidst the clink of glasses, popping of ginger-ale caps and general conversation, he demolished a whole roast duck with noisy satisfaction, and told the press he bore no grudge against the Canadian government and hoped to see the day when God would reveal the whole truth.

Among the honored guests was W. Shafonsky of Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan, ex-Cossack captain, who, after his escape from revolutionary Russia, had traveled in South America. Shafonsky was prepared to arrange passports for Verigin to almost any South American country to which he might wish to go. Another guest was John MacDougall of Camden, New Jersey, general manager of the American Colonization Company, who was prepared to sell half a million acres, known as Paradise Valley, situated forty miles from Saltillo, capital city of Coahualla, Mexico.

Makaroff, who was invariably at loss to explain these strange sessions to his Anglo-Saxon friends—short of writing a history of the Dukhobors—set out for Saskatoon.

At first the faithful on the prairies and in the mountains had heard that Peter Makaroff was responsible for saving Petushka from deportation. Knowing his influence with the Independents, Verigin made certain that Makaroff should not loom large in the eyes of the faithful. For this reason he telegraphed to the settlements that God and the judge had got him out of jail, and that Peter Makaroff had put him in again.

On the train Makaroff received an urgent telegram from Verigin. The government was taking further action for deportation. Would Makaroff wait in Winnipeg for him? He would leave Halifax immediately. So later at the Marlborough Hotel in Winnipeg more courtiers mingled with those whom Verigin brought with him, and there was a theatrical session with the gaunt-faced Shukin, the round-headed ex-White officer, Shafonsky, and various others.

And Makaroff again left for Saskatoon.

The next day Verigin removed to Saskatoon, where, as if emulating the flight across the continent to save him from deportation, he chartered two airplanes and dropped from the clouds over Blaine Lake there to address 2,000 of the faithful assembled in the new buff-brick hall of the Named Dukhobors. On this occasion he kept them waiting only six hours. He denounced Peter Makaroff, quoted from the New Testament, and in general delivered one of his customary orations.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

MIXED PROCEEDINGS

HIGH TORIES AT OTTAWA, convinced of the efficacy of sudden deportation as a partial cure for crime, the "Red Menace," unemployment, the low price of wheat and the Dukhobor problem, continued in their efforts to prove that their attempted deportation of Peter Verigin was legal.

On March 29, the supreme court of Canada gave decision that a convict, other than a Canadian, liable by his offence to be deported, continues to be subject to deportation, even if released prior to the expiration of his sentence under a valid exercise of the royal prerogative. An act of clemency in releasing a convict from prison prior to completion of the term of his sentence may be valid and effective in law without consent of the convict. This was the unanimous opinion of the supreme court.

But the highest legal authorities of Nova Scotia immediately pointed out that Peter Verigin could not be deported from that province, that the Halifax judge's release of Verigin still stood—in Nova Scotia.

Prime Minister Bennett, a man of vigorous, impulsive determination, corporation lawyer, bold orator, millionaire, was possessed also of Russiaphobia. To him, Bolshevik Russia was a fit place for nearly all undesirable persons of earth. Besides, he was convinced that Verigin's removal to Russia would immediately diminish Canada's Dukhobor problem. He might have had the Dukhobor chieftain spirited away aboard a steamer bound from Vancouver.

But public opinion would not allow it. Canadians, irked with continued business depression and unemployment that Bennett had promised to banish, were easily roused against the government's secret deportation policy. Editorials upbraided it from coast to coast. Newspapers admitted that Verigin might not be a very desirable resident of Canada, but in resisting and defeating the arbitrary methods resorted to by the department of immigration, he had done a substantial public service. "This whole business of kidnapping people and rushing them out of the country on the

say-so of a board of immigration officials will have to be stopped," declared the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

Canon Scott of Quebec, a loyal and dutiful subject of His Majesty the King, was stirred to indignation by the secret trials and banishments of men to European countries—even to England and Scotland. That men might be arrested, tried privately, denied the privilege of calling outside witnesses, and deported secretly across the sea according to the opinion of immigration officials, brought Canon Scott, and others to declare themselves. "I hate to think that in my native land we have to build up the security of a free people by the methods of the star chamber . . . every drop of British blood—and, whether for worse or better, I have no other—boiled in me," this Anglican clergyman wrote to the press.

Thus, though Peter Verigin could have been legally deported, even without resort to secret process, for he had been convicted of a criminal offense prior to the expiration of five years from the date he entered Canada, the government dropped the case.

A few weeks earlier, on April 28, Verigin in Yorkton gave notice that he would discontinue his lawsuit against J. A. M. Patrick, K. C., for recovery of \$7,000 legal fees. Simultaneously he announced that Peter Makaroff was no longer his lawyer.

In the latter part of April and early in May, while he continued to address the faithful on his return from Halifax, there was a stirring among Sons of Freedom in Saskatchewan. Six women, whose husbands were serving terms of two years and more in Saskatchewan Penitentiary for parading in the nude, wrote to Premier Anderson of Saskatchewan. In their letter the six wives offered to the premier the titles to their husbands' land by the Sons of Freedom village of Terpanie. "Titles to land are your invention," they wrote, "so now you can take them back, but land is still God's creation and such it will remain . . ."

What Peter Verigin had done to agitate further protests and nude parades that summer, is not revealed. His ambiguity, their peculiar creed, and increasing confusion on all sides, made for circumstances which neither he nor they, nor Professor S. R. Laycock, the psychologist at the University of Saskatchewan, could explain. The hearty Premier Anderson—who after his party's defeat once more became a life insurance sales manager—seldom hesitated to express indignation at the preposterous behavior of the Dukhobor fanatics whom the Liberals had brought to Canada. Yet such fantasy did not entirely displease him. In the mad Dukhobors, at least, was a problem concerning which

he could emphatically state himself. And for this he was not altogether ungrateful, faced as he was with economic and social conundrums so full of puzzlement that he felt constrained to be ambiguous about them.

Like his mentor, the prime minister, he believed that removal of P. P. Verigin from the midst of the Dukhobors would result in the solution of the Dukhobor problem, in the same way that removal of unemployed agitators would be the solution of unemployment.

In mid-June, that time of promise on the prairies when poplar leaves are greenest, wild strawberry blossoms are whitest, and when the wheat is growing from moisture left behind by winter snows, despite hot winds or hail to follow, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police at Yorkton were informed that Sons of Freedom in the vicinity of Verigin were once more preparing to parade nude. Consequently, two guardians of the law in plain clothes, Detective-Sergeant N. J. Anderson and Constable M. Nolan, were dispatched to the district.

It was on June 18 that the two mounted policemen in a Ford car encountered a parade of about five hundred and fifty Dukhobors, three miles from the town of Verigin. Among the fifty naked ones, carrying their clothes under their arms, were the six wives who had written to Premier Anderson on behalf of their imprisoned husbands. Five hundred sympathizers, approximately, marched fully clothed, in the rear.

"There are our enemies, the enemies of Christ," said Mrs. Laura Larasoff who, after pointing an accusing finger at the policemen, defiantly folded her arms. Her husband was in prison for nude parading.

"Why are they always tormenting us?" asked an old man.

Constable Mickey Nolan, whose name before he had changed it, was Michael Novokovski, inquired in Russian why they had undressed.

An old lady of seventy stepped forward to answer him.

"Christ came to this earth naked, and so did we, his followers. God made men and women, and if men and women are ashamed of their bodies they must also be ashamed of God."

Constable Nolan had grown up in Blaine Lake district, was a student of psychology, and a schoolteacher before he joined the police.

"But," Nolan remonstrated, "God gave man brains with which to make beautiful clothes to cover his nakedness, just as he gave

feathers to the birds and tails to the animals. By not using those brains you are turning away from God."

"Oh, yes," replied one of them, "we know you. You are a civilized man, copying the English. You would say that God gave humans brains so that they could pull the feathers from the chickens, then eat them."

"Da, da, and skin the cows, cut their tails off and make soup of them," another accused. "You believe in using force, and killing animals. You would even join an army and kill men."

"Our belief is in freedom," came a high-pitched voice, "and we must demonstrate that freedom to the whole world."

"It is not freedom you are demonstrating," said Nolan, "you are forcing other people to look at you in your nakedness."

"They are standing there," said a long-haired son, indicating the policemen, "standing there in our path forcing us to look at them with their clothes on when we do not wish to see them."

"But can't you understand that most of the people of Canada do not want to be naked, nor do they wish to see others naked?" asked Nolan, with a shade of exasperation. "The laws of Canada are made by the great majority of the people, and you also must obey those laws. If not, you are interfering with the freedom of other people."

"That is your civilization, the same civilization that killed Christ when the whole government and nearly all the people chased and tormented him. Your government put poor Petushka in prison. It teaches men to make guns and kill one another."

Detective-Sergeant Anderson got in the automobile, turned it around and drove back toward Verigin, where he telephoned for detailed orders from headquarters.

"It is terrible," said the old woman, squinting after the disappearing car, "I'm sure much trouble is coming."

One of the naked, whimpering children was taken in the arms of a bearded son with vacuous eyes. The first notes of a psalm rose with the dust as the assemblage moved on toward Verigin.

The brown-eyed and muscular Nolan marched with the parade. He knew the Sons of Freedom. He had a sympathy for them and their chaotic universalism, and that, perhaps, may have been why he held tenaciously to a faith in the Roman Catholic Church of his boyhood.

The psalm ended. There was thudding of many feet on the roadway, and the hum of a tractor in a farmer's field. The sun beat down on the rich green wheat, and from a fragrant clump of

wolfe-willow came the whining chatter of a catbird. The marchers reached the entrance of a stock corral in a pasture field where pink and white roses peeped out from the prairie grass. Constable Nolan commanded them to halt. After some argument he persuaded them to enter the corral, and ordered them to put on their clothes.

"Why should we dress ourselves?" asked one, "It is just as right that we should ask you to take off your clothes."

"You," said Mary Lebedoff, pointing an accusing finger at him, "you are the one who arrested my husband. Now you are here to torment us."

"He wore a red uniform then," said another, "now he wears ordinary clothes, and soon he will wear none at all."

"Let us show him the Christian way," shouted a woman whose plump body seemed colossal in her nakedness. "Let us take off his clothes." She advanced firmly toward the constable.

Pulling Nolan's shirt out from his trousers, she tried to tear his coat from his back. Set upon by a dozen women, he swung his baton. The men took no part in the fray, and soon the vanguard retreated. Amidst taunts hurled at the constable and his noncomplimentary remarks about their lack of grace, the women dressed and so did the men.

Detective-Sergeant Anderson, with reinforcements and trucks, arrived from Canora. With that combination of stubbornness and acquiescence innate in them, the sons and daughters allowed themselves to be loaded into the trucks.

In Canora the men were put in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and town cells, while the women and children were kept under guard in a vacant house. They were all fed bread and tea, and they passed the day, alternately singing psalms and urging the guards to remove their clothing and so show themselves in the Spirit of Christ. Men and women whom the police could not identify as having been nude, were released. Among these were two girls of eighteen, Polia Tarasova and Anna Verigina. The girls went back to their village that afternoon.

But the next morning, at 9:35 they returned to Canora on the westbound train. On the Canadian National station platform, to the amazement of passengers and the train meeters of Canora, they undressed. Followed by an old woman, Derhusova, who carried their clothes and whose son was serving a term at Prince Albert, they walked down Canora's main street to the house where the other women were detained.

Approaching the guards, Polia informed them that, "if our brothers and sisters must go to prison, we too will go." As soon as the girls were arrested, the old lady gave them their clothes and they dressed.

When all appeared before Police Magistrate Alex MacDonald, those thought to be ringleaders among the men were sentenced to terms at Prince Albert, while the greater number were sent to Regina Jail; the women being sent to the Battleford jail for women.

Throughout the summer of 1933, Sons of Freedom were being released from Piers Island Penitentiary and sent back to the settlements. Each was given an outfit of clothing, ten dollars in cash, and a railway ticket.

Some did not want to leave their brothers and sisters, saying that they had been sentenced to three years and only one year had gone by. But the Federal and provincial government found the incarceration costly, and were anxious to have the Sons of Freedom rehabilitate themselves on the land.

In the spring of 1933, the provincial minister of finance was faced with an estimate of \$86,000 for the maintenance of the children for the fiscal year. In an effort to balance the budget he whittled \$40,000 from the estimate, which meant that responsibility to that amount fell on the shoulders of William Manson, supervisor for neglected children. The supervisor had not the money to maintain the children at a cost of from sixty to eighty cents per day.

To assist rehabilitation of children and adults, a committee was formed of three unofficial representatives: John Sherbinin representing the Dukhobors, F. F. Payne, publisher of the *Nelson Daily News*, representing the public, and David B. Brankin, superintendent of the Provincial Industrial School for Boys, Port Coquitlan, representing the government.

Children of parents who were still on the island were accepted in the Dukhobor colonies, but the returning men and women were not generally welcomed by the Community people. Thus the Sons of Freedom had to plant vegetable gardens and begin farming anew after a fashion, on the sandy soil allowed them by the Community. Even those who wished to settle down found it difficult to do so.

The British Columbia government, through its attorney general, asked the commissioner of the provincial police to investigate the

situation in the settlements. Thomas Parsons, assistant commissioner of police, went to Nelson. With Payne, Inspector Macdonald of the Nelson division, Staff-Sergeant Barber and Spielmanns, the interpreter, Parsons went to Brilliant to interview Verigin, who reiterated his stand. The Sons of Freedom demonstrations had in the first place been directed against himself and the Community, he said. He would not have these provocators. They were criminals sentenced to prison by the government, and they were the government's responsibility. Yet, as a peaceful resident of Canada, he was willing to do all he could to help the government. If the Sons of Freedom would abstain from breaking the laws of the country he would allow them to settle on some nine hundred acres of unused Community land at Champion Creek.

Assistant Commissioner Parsons, in his report to headquarters of March 19, pointed out that little was to be gained in an attempt to rehabilitate the Sons of Freedom by "planting" them on a hostile Community. He thought Verigin's Champion Creek offer should be accepted, but that it was not sufficient. To avoid repetition of the costly situation, he suggested that the landless Dukhobor minority might be regarded in the same manner as a landless and itinerant Red Indian band and treated accordingly. Such a plan would imply, the Assistant Commissioner reported, "a Federal agent or custodian, fully familiar with the Dukhobor nature, language, history, system and objectives. In short, an educated Russian who—with all its implications—is a Canadian also."

For Federal agent or custodian, the assistant commissioner recommended a Russian count "of commanding appearance. He has studied, written and lectured on those of his countrymen in Canada."

Payne wrote to Attorney General Sloan, pointing out that he thought little money would be saved to the governments, even should the courts sustain a legal action forcing the Community to take back the Sons of Freedom.

In the meantime, men and women released from Piers Island continued to arrive in the Dukhobor settlements, and the cost of penitentiary upkeep was gradually lessened.

Verigin stayed mostly in Brilliant, instructing his bookkeepers and badgering Shukin. Among the destitute Sons of Freedom were many who had contributed to his "white horse fund," but now, when several of them reminded him of this money, he reproached them, saying the white horse had eaten the money and had died. "And you provocators are the ones who killed him!"

March 31, Verigin was in Nelson and sat drinking beer in the Savoy Hotel. Max Bashkin, a Russian-Jew in the lumber business, who found Peter's antics entertaining, was with him. About nine o'clock at night, Petushka began shouting and banging his fist on the table. The beer waiter did not like to interfere with him because he spent money freely and times were hard. All eyes were on Verigin. Bashkin told him to be quiet, but he insisted that he could not stay in a beer parlor where there were women customers, and the men were not gentlemen enough to remove their hats. After he had broken some glasses, the management sent for the police. He was stalking between the tables and shouting when Constable Bob Harshaw arrived.

"You had better keep quiet," said the constable who was born in County Down, south of Belfast, and looked it.

But Verigin continued to wave his arms and shout. Bashkin could not quieten him. They were all three husky men, the Dukhobor, the Irishman and the Jew; the spectators in the beer parlor looked on with increased anticipation.

"Come outside, I want to talk with you," said the constable.

"Son of a bitch," Verigin replied in English, and with that he punched Harshaw in the chest.

The blow knocked him back a step or two, but with set jaw he advanced, dodged the next blow, put a headlock on him, threw him on the floor and handcuffed him to the accompaniment of hearty applause from the tables.

Verigin was still bellowing in Russian as the constable dragged him through the door and out onto the street, where two Dukhobors, Nik Zaitsoff and Pete Markin, tried to interfere.

Zaitsoff directed a blow at Harshaw's head. Harshaw dodged, struck out and knocked him unconscious to the sidewalk. Markin jumped on Harshaw's back. Reg Bush, fireman, and Jack Reid, linotyper with the Nelson *Daily News*, pulled Markin off Harshaw's back.

Constable Harshaw took the three Dukhobors to the police station, where Verigin shook the bars liked a caged, mad animal and shouted curses. Max Bashkin bailed him out of jail that night. All three Dukhobors were convicted of being intoxicated in a public place and each was fined twenty-five dollars.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

POLITICS

PETER MAKAROFF, toward the end of 1932, had been given the honorary title of "King's Counsel." In Canada the title K. C. was awarded by the provincial political party in office at the time. Liberal governments usually conferred it on lawyers of Liberal persuasion; Conservatives on those of Conservative allegiance. Peter Makaroff belonged to no party; the Conservative government hopefully made him a K. C.

In the summer of 1932, when the boxcar tops of both trans-continental railways carried jobless men from Vancouver to Halifax and back again, a third party emerged in Canada, the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation. Launched in Calgary, Alberta, that August when prairie farm organization and labor leaders met to find a solution for the enigma of "poverty amidst plenty," the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation was formed, and proclaimed: "The C. C. F. is a federation of organizations whose purpose is the establishment in Canada of a co-operative commonwealth in which the basic principle regulating production, distribution and exchange will be the supplying of human needs and not the making of profits."

Into this agglomeration of Christian socialists, monetary reformers, Marxists, misfits, idealists, and men and women who were acclaimed a success in their various occupations, went Peter Makaroff in 1933. Opposed to war, the peace policy of the C. C. F. attracted him. He respected James Woodsworth, Winnipeg Labor M. P., who was unanimously elected leader of the new party, or federation as it preferred to be known. Whether from his stubborn and critical attitude toward the powers that were, or for idealism, Makaroff had a sympathy for the underdog; a sympathy on which he spent time and money, in between the remunerative cases that came to him in his profession. His "old party" and service club friends thought this promising lawyer a fool to align himself with what they saw as a Red movement offering neither material advantage nor social prestige.

Makaroff's Anglo-Saxon wife—daughter of a staunch Presbyterian and public school inspector—known in Saskatoon for her

queenly beauty and discernment, nearly persuaded him not to enter the Saskatchewan election as a C. C. F. candidate. But in the summer of 1934, Makaroff got into his car and drove north to Shellbrook constituency, where he was nominated Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation candidate. It was the new party's initial contest, and he was the first Dukhobor ever to try for a seat in a legislature.

Shellbrook constituency included Blaine Lake district, and Makaroff asked the Dukhobors for their support. This, most of them promised, though some doubted the virtue of voting. Among those who openly worked for his election were: Grandfather Osachoff—who still carried on his back the scars of soldier's whips for refusal of military service in Caucasasia—and his son, Nick; Nikito Popoff and his family, and the Bludoffs. The district was swinging into line, until Peter Verigin came to cast doubt on the efficacy of voting, hinting at the same time that the C. C. F. was Bolshevik.

Peter Makaroff arranged a meeting in the Dukhobor Hall and invited Peter Verigin to state his attitude. Verigin would have known what to say to the faithful in British Columbia, but in Blaine Lake district, he was hampered by Makaroff's influence, with the result that his oration was mild and ambiguous. When he sat down even the faithful did not know how to vote, or if to vote at all.

On election day, June 20, most of the Dukhobors went to the polls and voted for Makaroff. In the non-Dukhobor polls the C. C. F. was defeated by men and women who thought a "Red" party bad enough without having a representative with a name ending in "off." The final result of the voting was: Liberal, 5,105; C. C. F., 2,238, and Conservative, 2,165. The next session of the Saskatchewan Legislature saw a government of 49 Liberals, and an Opposition of five C. C. F. members and not one Conservative.

Within two weeks after the election in Saskatchewan, the Federal Conservative government argued for the Federal disenfranchisement of all Dukhobors in British Columbia. They had been barred from voting in provincial elections by a provincial act of October 1931. The act said that every person exempted or entitled to claim exemption from military service and every descendant of such persons be disqualified from voting. Now in the Federal Parliament, Conservative members led by Prime Minister Bennett, argued that the British Columbia act should be extended to Federal elections.

Woodsworth, the Winnipeg Labor M. P. and C. C. F. leader, strenuously opposed the legislation. He said it was absurd that all the Dukhobors, who might now be or might become residents of British Columbia, and their descendants, should be disqualified from voting in any elections.

"I am sorry to bring personal matters into this discussion," said Woodsworth in the House of Commons, "but the matter is such a serious one that I think I am justified. If this prominent Saskatoon lawyer who was a candidate in the recent Saskatchewan elections, should migrate to British Columbia, he would be disqualified and his descendants, the children of the daughter of a former lecturer at Queens would also be disqualified from voting."

Esling, Conservative member for the British Columbia constituency which included Brilliant district, urged that the Dukhobors be disenfranchised. He referred to fires, nude parades, bombing of schools. The Dukhobors, he said, did not know how to use their ballots.

Motherwell, Liberal M. P., said there were many peculiar people in Canada, and "If all the peculiar people are to be disenfranchised, how many of us will be left with the franchise?"

Prime Minister Bennett pursed his lips and declared Dukhobors were not being disenfranchised because of their beliefs. They refused to be recorded in the census and therefore they should not be entitled to vote.

"But," a member objected, "those Dukhobors who willingly give their names to the census takers, and Dukhobors who themselves have been engaged in taking the census, will be disqualified."

Mackenzie King, leader of the Opposition, agreed with Woodsworth. He did not think it advisable to "go back to the Old Testament times and seek to visit the iniquities of fathers upon descendants to the third and fourth generations."

But Prime Minister Bennett and his minister of justice were determined to disenfranchise every Dukhobor and his descendants who might be residents of British Columbia then or later. The Conservative members of parliament supported him, and the proposed legislation became law.

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CHAPTER FORTY

PETUSHKA PERVERSITY

IN SASKATCHEWAN there were a few Dukhobors, mostly under the age of thirty, enamored of the social and economic experiment in Soviet Russia. In the summer of 1934, at a meeting in Verigin, they formed the "Progressive Society of Dukhobors." Their manifesto, drawn up at this first convention, was a Dukhobor echo of the Communist phraseology:

"We, maintaining our Dukhobor principles shall help fraternal organizations toward resisting war preparations by supporting strikes, as that shall be a blow to the makers of war. . . .

"... carry into the world of oppressed and unfortunate brethren the torch of knowledge, help and the hope of a brighter future."

The manifesto stated that Independents, Individualists, Community and Sons of Freedom Dukhobors, who would accept the principles of the Progressive Society of Dukhobors, could become members of the new organization without losing their former identity.

Peter Verigin, seeing the new association as a threat to his authority, anathematized the membership as "No-Dukhobors and Bolsheviks."

Peter Verigin ordered a conference of the Named Dukhobors to be held in Verigin on July 29. It was similar to previous meetings. John Bonderoff, secretary of the Named Dukhobors, and Shukin and Cazakoff, vice-presidents of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited, were there. Several truck loads drove from British Columbia in the wake of their leader. In all there were about two hundred and fifty assembled around the ceremonial table on the ground floor of Verigin's Verigin mansion. They began with a psalm in song; while he stayed upstairs as a god in heaven. As usual, he kept them waiting, and when he did appear, he sat with his head in his hands for ten minutes before beginning his address.

The Named Dukhobors (in a "Declaration" issued and mimeographed in Russian and English at the conclusion of the confer-

ence) went on record as being unperturbed by their disenfranchisement in British Columbia:

"The modern world, generation of man, has scattered and divided itself into countless groups, following the watchwords and programs of the various political parties. Every political party strives against another not for the benefit and welfare of the people but for dominance over them, with all the consequences of a 'diabolical incitement.' The 'Named Dukhobors' never recognized and do not recognize any political party. They never entered nor will they ever enter the ranks of any political party. They never gave nor will they ever give their votes during elections. Thereby they are free from any responsibility before God or men for the acts of any government established of men. The 'Named Dukhobors' are essentially above party politics; they not only gave their votes but their bodies, blood and souls to the one and unreplaceable guardian of the hearts and souls of men—the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, thereby attaining perfect freedom.

". . . accepting and fulfilling the command of Jesus Christ: 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's'—meaning the governments of men—'and unto God the things that are God's . . . we triumphantly declare that, going under the banner of 'Toil and Peaceful Life' everything that is commanded of us which is not contradictory to the Law of God and to the Faith of Jesus, we will accept, fulfill and execute, not through fear but through conscientious guidance.

"We, the 'Named Dukhobors' have been, are, and will be members of Christ's Church, confirmed by the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ himself and assembled by his Apostles . . ."

They unanimously re-elected Peter Petrovich Verigin their leader of the Named Dukhobors. Supported by this mark of confidence, Verigin went to Winnipeg, where, on December 15, he appeared in city police court on a charge of assaulting Fritz Ammeter, an erstwhile interpreter.

Ammeter, a frail and pale-faced youth, told the court that he had gone to Verigin's hotel room on the morning of November 18, and had been cursed at by Verigin for appearing so late for his work.

"I will quit," said Ammeter, "so give me my wages." Instead, Verigin jumped up and hit him in the face. "I fell to the floor," Ammeter continued, "and he stepped on my head and kicked me in the side. I fainted and then a bellboy came and revived me with cold water. Then Verigin hit me in the face again."

At that point the bellboy intervened and dragged the unfortunate Ammeter from Verigin's room. The bellboy, John Serychuk, corroborated Ammeter's testimony to the court.

C. K. Guild, K. C., Verigin's counsel, refused to call Verigin to the witness stand, insisting instead that Verigin's act was that of a guardian to a youth who had done wrong by appearing late for his work. Ammeter's parents were in Russia, said the lawyer and "Verigin was sort of a Canadian father to him."

But Magistrate Graham could not be persuaded that Verigin's act had been a fatherly one; without further delay he sentenced Verigin to two months in jail without option of fine. When his lawyer appealed the case, the magistrate's sentence was sustained.

And once more word went out to the faithful that poor Petushka was suffering in prison for his Christian beliefs, at the hands of a man-made government.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

KAPUT

BEMOANING THE CRUEL IMPRISONMENT of their innocent leader, the faithful wrote letters of protest to newspapers and governments. Alex F. Verigin, a young relative of Peter, wrote in English from Grand Forks, March 19, 1935, to the Nelson *Daily News*:

"We youths, and all the Named Dukhobors . . . ask you to pay serious attention. You all well know that our leader P. P. Verigin is sentenced to serve a jail term at Winnipeg.

"We think that the person who first planned to make war deserves much more punishment than our leader for slapping a person on the face, and furthermore, you, day and night, again are getting ready for war to come. You are urging to have it; if not, you would not make war armaments of all kinds. You would day and night pray to God so as we all would have peace on earth.

"When we came to Canada . . . we thought, yes, this is a civilized country and so are the people in it, but to our great astonishment . . . it seems to us that there is no country that ranks as high in barbarism as Canada.

"What if your King George would be given once a nine months' term and another time two or three months with such treatment as you gave our leader?

"We feel pain, grief and sorrow and we can't stand the tortures of our leader any longer, you will either have to give him freedom or else take us all, for our motto is: 'One for all and all for one.'

"I thank you for your kind attention."

Another letter deploring the prison term given "our leader," accused the Canadian people of "being brought up in a beastlike manner, eating meat, using alcohol, so that now you do not know what you are doing yourselves. You are now thinking you are on the right path of God with your priests and ministers."

It would seem from this fervent letter, that neither young nor old of the faithful were aware of their leader's vices. If they ever did think of them with misgivings they, no doubt, re-assured themselves with the "confessional" statement he had made on several occasions: He would prefer to behave as Christ; he hated

vodka, meat, poker, fighting; but in these things it was necessary that he openly indulge, in order to fool the Canadian government. Otherwise, the government would discover his divinity, persecute him even unto death, as had been done to Christ at the hands of a government 2,000 years ago.

Among other explanations he had given for his behavior was when he died he would have to go to Hell, because God had told him there were Dukhobors there who could be released only by a personal visit from him. An angel could not go to Hell. So, much against his desire, he lived this life so that at death he could enter the gates of Hell and rescue their unfortunate brothers from the fiery furnace.

While these and similar explanations of his conduct—or none at all—satisfied the old folk among the faithful, young men and women were becoming confused. Though Petushka in his orations generally exhorted them not to drink liquor, not to eat meat, not to fight, not to dance, not to use profane language or musical instruments, there were those who furtively followed his example instead of his words.

Toward the end of March, 1935, the last of the Sons of Freedom were released from Piers Island Penitentiary and returned to the interior of British Columbia. Some of these arrived in Grand Forks district in time to take part in a parade protesting Petushka's imprisonment. The parade, due in part to economic conditions, was broken up by the police.

During the imprisonment of Sons of Freedom on the island prison, there were very few fires in the Dukhobor districts of British Columbia, under circumstances which would lead police to suspect arson.

Verigin was released from Headingly Jail, Winnipeg, early in May. He took a room in a Winnipeg hotel where he assured newspaper reporters that Headingly Jail was the best he had ever been in, and that whether he again would be in prison or not, would depend entirely "on the Will of God."

A new group of colonization promoters and real estate salesmen joined him in Winnipeg. Fifteen thousand Dukhobors were to migrate to the wild but rich lands of Paraguayan Chaco, where, near a Mennonite settlement, they would have religious liberty and be free from taxation for ten years. New York newspapers carried a story that Dr. Enrique Bordenave, representative of

Paraguay, was in New York discussing plans for the migration, with Dukhobor agents.

In the meantime, Verigin returned to Verigin where in a two-hour oration he warned the faithful that they would have to leave Canada "because Fascism is coming, but we will not go to Paraguay."

In Yorkton, Verigin owned six brick houses which he rented for profit. The houses had been built by Alex Chevaldaeff, contractor, when he was a member of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. In October 1932, while Verigin was in Saskatchewan Penitentiary, he transferred legal title to the houses to Chevaldaeff in trust. A year later, Chevaldaeff wrote to Verigin begging him to take back title to the houses. But the same year, Chevaldaeff was ousted from the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited, and he decided to keep the houses.

Consequently, on June 12, 1935, in King's Bench Court at Yorkton, Verigin sued Chevaldaeff for the houses and the court awarded the property valued at \$27,000 to Verigin.

"Peter's Day," June 29, was celebrated in Saskatchewan and British Columbia, with singing of psalms, speeches and eating. Anastasia's small settlement in Alberta observed the holiday in similar fashion, but declared it had nothing to do with Peter Petrovich Verigin. At Tarrys, British Columbia, Peter Maloff the Sons of Freedom leader, made a lengthy speech in which he reiterated that he was not a leader, despite the fact that many had tried to impose leadership on him.

Peter Maloff's oration, which his Sons of Freedom secretaries afterwards mimeographed in Russian and English and circulated for the world to read, touched on many subjects, and referred in particular to Piers Island Penitentiary:

To address an assembly of people at this strange moment, and most of all with so many different characteristics, intellectual tastes, and psychological natures, is certainly a task and a problem beyond my capabilities to fulfill [began Peter Maloff's encyclical in English] I have no special gifts of oratorical eloquence and fluency, in comparison to many of our modern learned prophets who can endlessly arrange and form beautiful phrases and sparkling expressions full of logical verbosity. Unquestionably on the whole my motives are fruitless however high and broad they appear to be . . .

My aims are impartial, free from prejudice and pretensions. For further accuracy and lucidity of the matter, I must add that in all

my life I have earnestly strived for only one goal—to improve my human characteristics in order to be a human being in the full sense of the word. How many of the human qualities I have attained, I cannot say, but whether you believe me or not, I am standing here today as a victim of circumstances, into which I have drifted by the deeper currents of life. Although I am an ex-convict and prison experiences have modified many of our thoughts, nevertheless I am convinced that if it were not for that incarceration I would never have stood here. And elucidation which shall follow is the consequence of it all. I believe it is my sacred duty before my conscience and the people whose son I am by heritage, to reveal the inner desire of those people. I shall try my best with all the honesty and understanding I possess to expound the fundamental question lying at the back of the Dukhobors' present unrest. . . .

I am raising my voice from the depths of the peoples' hearts who have just returned from exile to face the Canadian people and their representatives who have had so much to do with our imprisonment. This also refers to everybody else in the world. That is, if we have offended or hurt anyone, or all; firstly, with our sword, the tongue; secondly, with our spear, the pen; and thirdly, with the debasement of any of your refined tastes, by our nudity, we are asking you frankly to forgive us, as we are forgiving everyone else. More than this, we are giving credit to one of your officials, Colonel Cooper (warden of Piers Island Penitentiary), for his numerous wise suggestions. Otherwise the order of things might have been far worse . . . Colonel Cooper strenuously endeavoured to solve our agglomeration. Whether it was the philosophical investigations of the Dukhobor history which he undertook, or some other pressing factor . . . he was considerate regardless of his sanctified obligations . . . which required the exertion of an iron hand.

Now we desire to make peace with you all and the whole universe . . .

The current of history moves us so rapidly that we can hardly stop and study adequately the sequence of its events. There can be no question that we have drifted without a compass into a vast range of unknown waters . . .

Unnecessary to touch the question of our synthetic prison on the Pacific Coast and the enormous expenditure it has required from the government, not speaking of all the human reactions it has recorded. Yet how very few of us have ever stopped to think whether it has satisfied, even in the smallest degree, the purpose for which it was created.

I venture to declare before all so-called Christians of the world that there is more mystery about the existence and continuance of the Dukhobors' ideology than there is about any other existing philosophical thought.

But the most painful and sadly unalterable truth is unfolded in the fact that . . . it does not matter who we are, or whatever polished label we may possess, whether it is Catholic, Methodist, Episcopal, Baptist, Evangelist, Christian Science, Salvation Army, Lutheran, Dukhobor, Oxford Group, and so on, we daily stage with extraordinary dexterity the crucifixion of their sacred universal ideals. And is there any wonder that the Galilean has foreseen long ago our futility and asked: "Oh, ye serpents, generations of vipers, how can you escape damnation when you are fulfilling the deeds of Satan?"

After decrying the oppression of the rich over the poor, and quoting Charles Owen, Angelus Silesius, Sir Arnold Ewing, Chesterton and Tolstoy, Peter Maloff came to the conclusion that God's righteousness "is very likely existing everywhere with the exception of our planet."

His righteousness is most likely supreme on Jupiter, Mars, and all other planets of the Milky Way, but . . . here on earth . . . most apparently he must mind his own business . . . and not interfere with our earthly affairs engineered by such magnificent marvels as Mussolini, Hitler, Macdonald, Stalin, Roosevelt, Aimee Macpherson, the Pope, Charlie Chaplin, Jean Harlow, and a thousand others.

The only thing for us all to do now, is repent. Cease to be friends with murderers. Seek the Kingdom of God and all the rest shall be added unto you.

Whether Peter Maloff was uncertain of his attitude toward Peter Petrovich Verigin, or whether he thought it diplomatic to avoid mention of Petushka, not once did he refer to him throughout the lengthy oration given here in greatly abridged form.

On the same Peter's Day that Peter Maloff delivered his speech at Tarrys, forty-six tombstones were pushed over in the Sacred Heart Cemetery of Grand Forks town.

Sons of Freedom were suspected. Paul Vatkin, the bearded fanatic, had a few days before been released from Nelson Jail, where he had served a sentence of thirty days hard labor for riding a freight train out of Castlegar. But police were unable to fix responsibility for the graveyard vandalism which amazed and shocked the non-Dukhobor population of Grand Forks.

On September 26 Peter Verigin was in his favorite room at the Barry Hotel, Saskatoon, where a reporter interviewed him. Seated at the head of a table covered with newspapers on which was whole roast fowl, bread, salt, and several whisky bottles, he bowed to

the reporter and reached into a black leather club bag for a fresh bottle of Haig's Dimple; he called for clean glasses and poured whisky for all the guests. John Maloff, an Independent Dukhobor from Langham, who attended these parties whenever possible, was about to open a bottle of Drewrys Dry Gingerale—with a bottle opener.

"What is wrong with you?" asked Verigin, taking the bottle from Maloff's hand. "Is it always necessary to use the tools of civilization? I will show you that I am one of those artists who can do things."

With that, Verigin slid a tumbler of whisky close to the table's edge. Against the lips of this thin straight glass, he placed the beveled metal cap, and holding the bottle with one hand, he brought his other hand down on the top of the cap with such force and dexterity that the cap flew from the bottle, neither cracking the glass nor spilling the whisky in it.

"Not many men can drink as much as he, and do a trick like that," said Maloff, admiration in his watery blue eyes. "It is necessary to hit the cap exactly square; if that is not done the glass will smash in a hundred pieces."

Larion Verigin, Peter's nephew, whom he had brought as secretary and interpreter from British Columbia, looked on apprehensively.

"Ask Mr. Verigin," the reporter requested Larion, "what is his exact position, how does he wish to be referred to? As spiritual and temporal leader of the Named Dukhobors and president of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited?"

When Larion put the question in Russian, the others around the table stopped talking, so they would hear all of Verigin's answer.

"Kaput," Verigin shrugged. Then removing the cigarette from his lips, he went on in Russian, several times emphasizing "kaput" with raised hand.

Larion Verigin, in good English, told the reporter that Mr. Verigin wished to be referred to as ex-president of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. Mr. Verigin had resigned as president. He had resigned all his positions with Dukhobors. Those things were now "kaput" "finished, through forever."

Another release of words in Russian from Verigin.

"Mr. Verigin says," Larion resumed, "that he is not a Dukhobor any more. He is just an ordinary citizen of Canada. But he will have nothing to do with politics."

The interview gathering speed, Larion translated from Russian to English and back again with machinelike precision. Everything was "kaput." Verigin was "one million times through with the Dukhobors, through with Aberhart's Social Credit in Alberta, Steven's Reconstruction, Conservative, Liberal, C. C. F. and Communist." He put a "kaput" on all political parties in existence and added an advance curse on any new ones which in future might arise.

"I would have no parties," he said in English amidst a torrent of Russian. Fists clenched in emphasis, eyelids narrowed in intensity, his baritone voice reverberated around the hotel room. He spoke with a rapidity that made his interpreter raise his Tartar-looking eyebrows and thrust forward his head to catch those flying Russian words and turn them into English.

"Mr. Verigin says," said Larion when Verigin ceased abruptly, "all candidates elected on the basis of party representation are tied hands and feet to dictatorship of their party. They have to vote in Parliament in obedience to their party leaders. They can do nothing for the people."

"Ask Mr. Verigin on what basis he would have members elected to Parliament?" said the reporter.

Verigin advised the Canadian people to dispense with parties, elect "good men," tell them what to do, "and if they do not do it, fire them out of Parliament in four days instead of waiting four years." Verigin went on to say that he was a communist but not a Bolshevik. Asked if he thought there was any truth in Prime Minister Bennett's statement that the unemployed trekkers riding the freights to Ottawa meant to hold the prime minister as hostage while they took over the government, Verigin answered: "God knows, I can only speak for myself."

When the next day the interview appeared in the newspapers across Canada, Verigin's vanity and sense of humor was satisfied, while the public, unable to be present at Peter Verigin's court, found the report entertaining.

Some young Dukhobors had attended high school and university, and were standing on their own feet. Having made their individual adjustments to the civilization of the North American continent, they neither looked credulously to Petushka, nor scorned the more desirable characteristics of their ancestors. A few less equipped young men had become lost in the shifting sands of transition. Disillusioned with many things Dukhobor, they

were dazzled by the seamier side of Western Canada. Three such young men, in the autumn of 1935, traveled together in the vicinity of Arran town—in what was the Thunder Hill Colony of their fathers—where recently stores had been broken into and robbed. Police had not arrested them, but Joe Posnikoff, Pete Voiken, John Kalmakoff were suspected. John Kalmakoff had served three months for theft of grain, earlier in that year.

The way of life of these unfortunate young men, was, the fall of 1935, aptly illustrated by a letter written in English to Peter Voiken, at Arran, by Joe Posnikoff, then in the prairie town of Kelvington.

*September 6,
Kelvington,*

HELLO HUSKER,

I'm sorry I had to leave Arran. But brother it won't be long until we are together again and we will do things I'm telling you. I'll be here for two weeks and then I'll come to see you. I'm sorry I had to take your knife and flask and light batteries, but they are safe and I bought new batteries today and its O. K. Lots of girls here . . . Boy its a good place Pete. Please come here next Friday and you can stay with me and go home on Saturday, so this is a bargain if you have time. Go to Kamsack and see John K. about that and bring if possible because here is a good chance to do things.
Goodbye, Good Luck,

JOSEPH.

Answer me quick please.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

MURDER

ON THE AFTERNOON OF FRIDAY, October 4, 1935, Joe Posnikoff, Pete Voiken and John Kalmakoff were back in Arran district. They were looking for spending money and the entertainment they liked best, and adventure of the kind they had read about in English-language "action" novels.

None of the three young men were big in any way. Joe, the tallest, was also the most daring. He usually thought of what "the gang" should do next, and he swaggered the most. Pete was shorter and more cautious. John, the smallest, unable to bluster as readily as either of the other two, covered his indecision by following Joe, the leader.

Joe had managed to procure an old Buick automobile minus a top and license plates. Its back seat was out as the boys had agreed to "make a truck out of it." They were really going to do things then. "There is money to be got, if a guy is smart."

"But tonight we're going to have a good time," said Joe. "Get some homemade vodka, and maybe some girls." There would be a dance too, at Steinberg's Hall, about twelve miles southeast of Arran.

They got a quart bottle of home-brew, distilled from wheat, and drove for Steinberg's dance hall. En route, they stopped at the Bugera farm, inviting Paul Bugera, nineteen, to go along with them. The Ukrainian lad thought it thrilling to ride there with Joe Posnikoff and his gang. The quart was about two thirds gone when they got to Steinberg's and looked the place over.

Joe said, "Oh hell, there might not be many girls here tonight. Husker, you and John take the car and get those two Ogloff girls. If you get lost, ask in Benito, at the garage; they will know."

When Pete Voiken and John Kalmakoff stopped at the garage, William Wainwright, garage owner and municipal constable, thought them suspicious characters. Pete Voiken, wearing a fawn hat and light suit, was driving, and he spoke sharply when he asked where Ogloff lived.

As Wainwright was about to tell him, the bus came in from Swan River, and old man Ogloff got out.

"There's Mr. Ogloff," said Wainwright.

As the two boys, with Ogloff, pleased to be getting a ride home, drove away, Constable Wainwright remarked to his son Phil that those two young fellows might have had something to do with holding up Fawcett and Smith's store recently.

"I think I'll telephone Constable Shaw at Swan River," he said.

Constable Shaw of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police thought it would be worth-while to question the two. He had an idea he knew them. "Will you go with me, Bill?"

"Sure, I'll go," said Wainwright. "We should find them at Ogloff's or get trace of them there. What time will you be over?"

"As soon as I can get away," Constable Shaw said.

Almost two hours later, ten o'clock, Shaw had not arrived, and father and son began balancing the cash for the day. William Wainwright, taking the money out of the till and his pocket, counted it into three piles on his desk.

"We've not had such a bad day, Phil. There's J. Harris' gas money, there's the insurance money, and here's Gillis and Warren's sight draft money. If accounts keep coming in like they have in the last few days, we'll soon be square with the world."

"Yes," Phil said, "it's been pretty good this fall, considering the crop and the price of wheat."

William Wainwright put the \$135 in his hip pocket. From the desk drawer he took a box of .38 caliber revolver cartridges, counted out twelve, putting them in the left-hand pocket of his leather windbreaker. He tapped his other pocket where the .38 Colt was, and made sure he had the handcuffs.

It was eleven o'clock before Constable Shaw arrived. "I thought it best to come in plain clothes, there's no use scaring those fellows with a uniform before we have a talk with them," Shaw said.

The municipal and R. C. M. P. constables drove toward the Ogloff farm in the mountie's car. Ogloff and the family were in bed. The old man came downstairs and told the policemen that Pete Voiken and John Kalmakoff had taken his two daughters to a dance.

"What's the trouble? Anything wrong?" Ogloff asked.

"No," said Shaw, "we want to ask the boys some questions. They might be able to give us information we are looking for."

The constables arranged to wait in the kitchen until the boys brought the girls home from the dance; and, after a while, old Ogloff went upstairs to bed.

Meanwhile, Voiken and Kalmakoff had taken the girls to Stein-

berg's Hall where Joe Posnikoff was waiting for them. Joe had got some more home-brew from somewhere. There was swing music, and square dances, and the dance went on until after three o'clock in the morning. There was quite a lot to drink and a couple of fights in the semidarkness outside the hall. The orchestra played "Home Sweet Home" in a slow waltz time; men and women retrieved their coats from the cloakrooms, and outside in the fall air there was a coughing of exhausts from cold motors.

Joe Posnikoff, Pete Voiken and the two girls sat in the front seat of the hoodless Buick, John Kalmakoff and Paul Bugera in the back where a seat used to be.

It was dark in the Ogloff house, as it should be at that time of the morning, when the two sisters entered the kitchen. They were startled when a voice asked, "Where are your boy friends?"

"Who's that?" one girl exclaimed.

At that moment Posnikoff and Voiken walked in. Constable Shaw, snapping his flashlight on them, told them the police wanted to ask some questions.

"What for?" asked Joe. "We haven't done nothing."

"We didn't say you had done anything," Shaw replied. "But we would like you to come with us to Benito so that we can have a talk there."

"Sure, we'll come," said Joe. "We have nothing to be scared of, because we ain't done nothing against the law."

The police drove back to Benito in their car, while the three and Paul Bugera followed in the Buick. In Wainwright's garage the two constables questioned them about the car they were driving.

"Why have you no license plates on it?" Shaw asked.

"Well," said Joe, "I haven't got a license yet. I was just trying the car out. If I buy it I'll get a license."

It was after four o'clock in the morning when Constable Shaw decided to let them go, but made them promise to return to Benito before noon.

The four drove away in the Buick, and then Shaw had an idea that he and Constable Wainwright should follow them.

The four drove straight to Ogloff's farm where Joe got the girls' brother out of bed to ask what the policemen had asked about them.

They soon left again, intending to deliver Paul Bugera home, because Paul kept saying he was tired and wanted to go home. About three miles from Arran, two men got out of a car and stopped them. They were constables Shaw and Wainwright.

They ordered Posnikoff, Voiken and Kalmakoff to get into the back seat of the police car.

"What will I do with the car I have?" Joe Posnikoff asked.

"Let the other fellow, Paul Bugera, drive it into Benito," Shaw replied.

Paul was nervous. He drove down the road, ahead of the police car, for about three telephone-pole lengths, and then he drove into the ditch.

"What's the matter?" shouted Shaw, coming alongside.

Paul complained that the windshield was frosted and he couldn't see. Besides, he was sleepy.

"Get in the back," Shaw said. "There will be time to fetch Posnikoff's car in daylight."

As they drove on, Posnikoff got angry. He was mumbling about the police having no business to arrest him. Near Arran where the Bugera farm was, Shaw stopped the car and Paul got out to go home.

Shaw continued on toward Pelly, Wainwright in the front seat with him. In the back seat, the three Dukhobors talked in low tones in Russian. Joe felt desperate; he was not going to go to jail.

It was about two miles on south from Pelly, just as Shaw was turning west, that Joe led the assault on the unsuspecting constables. A knife flashed in the fire from revolver shots. The car swerved off the road into the ditch. Shaw and Wainwright slumped in their seats. Shaw had three bullet holes in the back of his head. Wainwright had one bullet hole and a knife gash behind his ear.

"Those buggers are as dead as gophers now," said Posnikoff.

"We will be hung for murder." Kalmakoff was horrified.

"It's done now," said Joe. "Get out of the car. We have to hide them somewhere."

They dragged the policemen feet first through the door, and off the road allowance, the heads leaving a trail of blood on the frosted prairie grass. In a hay slough, a few yards from the highway, they left them.

"Skoro! Quickly! Back to the car. We have to get away from here," Joe ordered.

"Oh! Why was this done?" Kalmakoff's voice broke. "It is terrible to kill people," he sobbed.

"It will be yet more terrible if they catch you," Posnikoff said.

"Postoi, first we will look in their pockets. It is necessary. We will need everything."

They stripped the corpses of money, cartridges, took Wainwright's handcuffs, and a ring from Shaw's finger.

The car in the ditch was not damaged except where the fender had buckled against a stone.

"It's all right." Joe threw a blanket over the front seat wet with blood, and got behind the wheel.

All felt need of a drink, and after some discussion they agreed to drive to a farmer who had a still. There they bought a gallon of home-brew.

The white whisky made them feel so good they forgot about sleeping and even John talked about big things to come.

"We're going to do a lot of things and have a hell of a good time," said Joe. "Possibly we will go to the United States where real big guys are."

The sun was high, and they were only about eighteen miles from the scene of their crime when they became hungry and turned in to the Perpeluk's who were Ukrainians.

Mrs. Perpeluk met them at the kitchen door. She recognized Joe Posnikoff.

"You're Joe, aren't you?"

"Yes. Has there been anyone around this morning?" Joe asked her.

"No, did you want to see my man?"

"We're hungry. We'll pay for our dinner," Joe replied.

"Come in and sit down. It is near dinnertime," wiping her hands on her apron.

Perpeluk was sitting in the kitchen. He had just come back from a threshing outfit that finished on a neighbor's place at two o'clock that morning.

Posnikoff had to introduce himself by his right name; but Voiken gave a name other than his own, and John Kalmakoff said that he was "John Oscar."

"Have you been threshing on some farm?" Perpeluk blinked his eyes from behind his cigarette smoke.

"No," Joe replied in English, "we're looking for some guys." Turning to John he said in Russian, "Ivan, bring the vodka from the car."

When John returned with the jug and they had asked for glasses and poured drinks, he felt bolder. Going over by the stove where

Perpeluk's sister's girl was canning fruit, he told her he was a detective.

"Ne pravda, not true," the girl continued stirring the simmering fruit in a large iron pot.

"Pravda!" said John, pulling from his pocket a pair of handcuffs. "Look at these."

"Let me see." She let the spoon slip through her fingers.

He fastened the handcuffs on her wrists. She protested; he took from his pocket a little case of keys and unlocked the manacles.

"*Khorosho!* Very good!" he laughed.

But the smile left her face when Voiken took off his overcoat. From a belt around his waist hung a revolver and a knife.

Voiken, with piratical bravado, sat down at the table, pulled out his pistol and placed it beside his steaming bowl of soup. Joe and Kalmakoff did the same.

Three revolvers on the table.

Perpeluk's mouth opened wide, and with thumb and fingers he pressed his lower lip together.

"It's all right." Joe noticed Perpeluk's consternation. "We are only detectives looking for those guys who murdered the policemen."

"Policemen? What policemen?" asked Perpeluk.

"Didn't you hear?" Joe went on between spoonfuls of soup. "Didn't you hear about the policemen being murdered?"

Perpeluk had not heard.

"We can't tell you everything," said Pete.

"Yeah," echoed John. "You see detectives have to keep lots of things secret."

They went on talking in English and Russian. John said he wasn't Russian or Dukhobor, but he was Russian-German. That's why his last name was Oscar.

"Were the policemen buried yet?" Perpeluk inquired, still incredulous.

"No, not yet," said Joe. "They have to see the coroner first."

They poured some more drinks, paid for their meal and went out to the car.

"If you see any guys around that look like murderers, telephone us at headquarters," Joe shouted as they drove away.

Perpeluk was puzzled. Surely those boys were not detectives. But true to the traditional suspicion of the Central European peasantry toward officialdom, he did not notify the police. He specu-

lated about it with his wife, and early in the afternoon hitched up four horses for fall plowing.

The murderers, not sure where they were going or why, arrived at Legebokoff's farm, about one o'clock that Saturday afternoon. John Legebokoff and his sister were the only members of the family at home; the rest had gone to town, to buy clothes, sugar and flour, for the winter to come.

Young John Legebokoff knew the three boys; he thought they looked kind of drunk, and asked them where they were going.

"Oh, to some far-off place," said Joe, getting out from behind the wheel.

"Have an accident?" Legebokoff surveyed the dented fender.

"Yeah, and we killed a couple of guys." Joe went on to say they had been driving sixty-five miles an hour.

"Sure, we killed two men," said Pete Voiken after Legebokoff had said that he did not believe that.

To convince him they lifted up the blanket over the front seat and showed him the blood. As they drove away one of them shouted that they were "going to America."

Young Legebokoff stood in the yard scratching his head, then went in the house and told his sister. But neither reported the visit to the police.

Later that afternoon the murderers stopped at Preeceville and bought gasoline and oil at Down's Garage. They got to Kitar's farm about nine o'clock in the evening, picked up Mary Kitar and drove to Kelvington where the two Evans' girls, half-Indian sisters, joined the party. All six drove to Fosston and had a meal in the Chinaman's cafe. It was late when they delivered the Evans' sisters back to Kelvington. They took Mary Kitar home and went to sleep for a few hours in the Kitar granary.

Sunday morning, about nine o'clock, they were traveling west again.

During this fantastic odyssey, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were looking for constables Shaw and Wainwright, and the Wainwright family and friends were becoming more and more anxious. But it was not until Monday morning, fifty hours after the murder, that John Calanchie, farmer of Arran district, discovered the bodies. Calanchie was driving a wagonload of grain to the elevator in Arran. Along the road his horses shied and snorted. He tried to urge them on but when the frightened animals backed against the doubletree, he noticed something queer lying in the hay slough past the fence. There were two bodies. He

led the horses on. In Arran he told Bill Chernenkoff, the British American Elevator Company agent, what he had seen.

Chernenkoff telephoned the R. C. M. P. at Pelly. Constables Reid and Erskine were at the scene within an hour. Corporal Walker of the criminal investigation bureau arrived. They picked up the trail of the murderers, questioned the Evans girls at Kelvington, and obtained a .32 caliber revolver shell that Clifford Kitar had found on the granary floor of the Kitar farm. But at the Kitar farm the trail ended.

Posnikoff, Voiken and Kalmakoff traveled fast. Less than twenty hours after they left the Kitar farm they were more than seven hundred miles south-west of the Rocky Mountain entrance gate to Banff National Park in Alberta, and only a few miles from the British Columbia boundary. When they found they must give particulars of the car to the park gatekeeper, they drove east to Exshaw.

They bought gasoline at Exshaw, and when Roy Zeller, the garageman, observed that the Manitoba license number was the one being radioed by the police, he telephoned to R. C. M. P. Constable Bonner at the coal-mining town of Canmore. The information was relayed east and west, and through the darkness police in automobiles converged on Exshaw.

The hunted men turned west again.

"We will have to get another car," said Joe, who was driving. "We'll hold one up and take it, on the rough piece of grade where they are fixing the road."

About two miles west of Canmore, on the new grade, they stopped. The lights of a car approached slowly from behind.

T. C. Scott of Calgary, Alberta, and his wife were in the car. Scott was a traveling salesman for ointments, spices, medicine and flavoring extracts. When, a few yards ahead of him, he saw three men on the road, two of them with flashlights, he became suspicious; took most of the money out of his pocket and slid it under the seat. He stopped as they surrounded him with their flashlights.

"Can you give us some gas?" one of them asked.

"Yes," Scott answered. "Have you anything to get it out of my tank with?"

A hand with a revolver came through the open window; the voice behind it said, "Get out of that car."

Mrs. Scott faced a gun too. The Scotts got out into the middle

of the road where one of the men went through his pockets, obtaining about \$10 in silver.

The robbers obviously were nervous and undecided as to their next move. One of them got into Scott's car and tried to start the motor but Scott had an unfamiliar switch on it. He got out again, saw that he had overlooked Scott's watch, and took that. They talked alternately in Russian and English, asked Scott if there was any money hidden in his car, wanted to know if Banff was in British Columbia, mentioned "going to the States."

"You had better let my wife get back in the car and let us get out of here; you have our money," said Scott, still standing on the road with his hands above his head.

"Shut up," said one in English. Then, talking among themselves in Russian for a few moments, they abruptly ordered Scott and his wife into the car.

"You had better give me back my watch," said Scott, following his wife into the car. "You have our money."

"You can have it back if you promise not to tell the police."

"I promise," Scott said, intending to notify the police at the first opportunity.

"Can we trust you?" asked the man who seemed to be the leader.

Scott received his watch, but they noticed his wife's purse hanging on the door and they took the three dollars from it.

"I thought you told us there was no money in the car—"

"I hope you will leave me my handkerchief," Mrs. Scott interrupted.

"Oh, yes, madam, we will leave you your handkerchief. We know handkerchiefs are necessary." And, sticking a gun in Scott's face, "Now drive like hell. We will be right behind you. If you tell the police, we will kill you."

As Scott let out the clutch, they saw a glare of lights from a car coming toward them from the west.

"I wonder if they'll hold up this car, too," said Scott to his wife.

"Look! The police," she said.

"The robbers are right behind us," Scott shouted to the police.

"Keep on going!" one of the policemen shouted back.

Barely had the two cars passed when the shooting began.

Whether the two policemen or the boys started firing first, is not known. Constable Harrison and Sergeant Wallace were stand-

ing in the path of the approaching car. Shots were exchanged with increasing rapidity, as the first two policemen were joined by Campbell and Combe; soon Constable Bonner and Magistrate Hawke of Canmore arrived.

As the firing pierced the darkness, and the shots rang out on the mountain highway, Sergeant Wallace asked Combe for more ammunition. Wallace fell to the gravel before he received it.

Combe, noticing the figure of a man running into the spruce trees, exchanged shots. Campbell helped Wallace into an automobile. Then Combe, closing up on the fugitive car, saw something lying under it. It had on black breeches with a yellow stripe. He saw it was Harrison, badly wounded. Combe tried to start the motor, but couldn't, so he backed up a few feet with the starter.

Campbell took the dying policeman to Canmore, while Combe, Bonner and Hawke continued the battle in the bush where the men had taken cover. The policemen couldn't see what they were firing at, but they fired at the gunshot flashes for almost an hour before Campbell returned from Canmore. The police split up into two parties; Bonner and Hawke to the east, Combe and Campbell to the west, in order to intercept traffic and stop the murderers from getting too far away before help and sunrise came.

Campbell ran down the highway to stop an approaching car, while Combe, running in the opposite direction, flashed his light on a man propped up on one elbow with a revolver in his other hand. Combe took deliberate aim and fired. It was Joe Posnikoff; he was shot twice through the left breast, once through his wrist and once through his head.

Until dawn, Combe and Campbell patrolled their end of the highway, while Bonner and Hawke patrolled theirs. But there was no sign of the other two Dukhobors.

At daybreak they received word that Sergeant Wallace had died in Canmore. Police and citizens formed a posse.

William Neish, park warden of Banff National Park, and Harry Leacock, Dominion government storekeeper at Banff, volunteered to hunt by themselves. They searched the bush about two miles west of the park gate. In the new snow, they saw foot tracks of two men, leading farther into the bush. They followed them for about fifty yards when someone ahead opened fire.

Neish couldn't see anything through the snowstorm, but he took a chance and shouted, "Come out, we have you covered!"

Another shot was the answer.

Neish and Leacock lay in the snow of the hillside and kept shooting. Soon there was a scream.

"You got one, Bill," said Leacock, pointing to a log with a rifle barrel sticking over it. Leacock called out that if anyone was alive he should surrender for it was useless to continue the battle.

The answer was another shot.

Bill Neish fired at the log, just an inch below the protruding rifle. The firing ceased. Mounted police, who had heard the shooting, arrived. All advanced toward the log. Behind it Pete Voiken and John Kalmakoff were lying, both dying men.

By noon, Voiken and Kalmakoff were in the hospital at Banff. Both had been shot in the stomach. On Kalmakoff's finger was a signet ring with the initials "J. G. S."

Pete Voiken died about five o'clock that afternoon, without saying anything. Kalmakoff talked disjointedly: "We were all shooting . . . yes, we held up a man and his woman. In Saskatchewan, Joe fired at the policeman . . . Pete stabbed Wainwright . . . I did nothing then. . . . Some cops are not wise. Benito police should have put handcuffs on us. Too late now. They lost their lives and we lost ours, all through a little mistake."

So John Kalmakoff died. The total death toll was four policemen and the three Dukhobor youths.

News of the first ugly murder near Arran, followed by that of the dash across two provinces and final desperate killing of two more policemen in the mountains bordering British Columbia, shocked the Dukhobors. It was the first time a Dukhobor had been found guilty of murder since the sect migrated to Canada thirty-six years before.

John Kalmakoff's seventy-year-old father and crippled mother waited for relatives to bring their son's body home to Arran. Gregori Posnikoff, father of Joe, went to Banff for the body of his son.

Peter Verigin, whose confused brain was less sensible to the outrage, took opportunity to blame the tragedy on "Communist provocators" who had "poisoned the minds" of the three young men.

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CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

MAN THE UNKNOWN

MAN, THE UNKNOWN is the title of a book by Alexis Carrel, published in 1935. Carrel wrote that "A group, although very small, is capable of eluding the harmful influence of the society of its epoch by imposing upon its members rules of conduct modelled on military or monastic lines. It is chiefly through intellectual and moral discipline, and the rejection of the habits of the herd, that we can reconstruct ourselves. Sufficiently large groups could lead a still more personal life. The Dukhobors of Canada have demonstrated that those whose will is strong can secure complete independence, even in the midst of modern civilization."

Few sects in the midst of civilization were as widely "unknown" as the Dukhobors; their persistent secretiveness, peculiar creed and behavior allowed them to be used as examples for and against various theories.

For his turbulent conduct one night, Peter Verigin was ejected from the Yorkton Hotel. Soon after, he let a contract for the building "of a hotel of my own, one that nobody will kick me out of." That autumn, en route from Yorkton to Brilliant, he made another of his spasmodic appearances in Saskatoon, where, in Peter Boshuk's Venice Café, he enthralled an impromptu audience with fast talk and loud profanity far into the night. Shafonsky, a man who prided himself on his White Russian heritage, was again with Verigin. So was the diminutive Russell Popoff, young Dukhobor, poker-game promoter, erstwhile chauffeur and aide to Petushka. With them in the café booth sat John Maloff, faithful satellite from Langham. While Verigin roared in Russian, constantly waving his arms, curious Slavs of Saskatoon's West Side pressed so close to his table they blocked the passageway. Behind the overcrowded stools of the lunch counter, stood two rows of fascinated gapers.

Boshuk, the Ukrainian proprietor, short, stout and ordinarily genial, wished with some irritation that Verigin would leave. His restaurant was not a theater!

But Verigin thundered on that he was a free citizen of Canada.

He worked in the interests of the toiling people. He would help Canada get rid of Bolsheviks; he was sorry that three young Dukhobors had strayed from the ways of God and murdered four policemen.

He loosed a torrent of profanity against John Bonderoff who had forsaken him and written a book maligning him. He, Verigin, would get that book. He would have the Sons of Freedom get that unholy book, if they had to burn Bonderoff's house down.

He soon went to Brilliant, where letters awaited him. These, as usual, were mostly from believers, some of whom enclosed gifts of money: "Dear Petushka, Christ has Risen. Slava Bohu. We hope, dear Petushka, that you are in good health . . ." There were a few letters in English, which he could not read, from mortgage companies, banks and lawyers.

He sat importantly in the Community office opening his mail, and pretended to be oblivious of the faithful ones standing respectfully by the door. He placed a banknote or two on the pile at his elbow, reached for another envelope, and impressively held it up to the light. "Ah-ha! From Italy," he said, as if to himself, but in a baritone amply loud enough to be heard by the believers. Vigorously tearing open the envelope, he extracted the letter. "Oh! his voice rose to a squeal, "that Mussolini, sukinsin, is writing again. Now he is stuck in the mud in Ethiopia, and he wants Petushka to tell him what to do. When he asked my advice before I told him to stay out of Ethiopia, so now I will tell the sukinsin nothing."

A broad-shouldered, mustached man at the doorway nudged his open-mouthed neighbor and whispered, "Mussolini writing to Petushka again!"

"Is this office of mine filled with hissing snakes?" shouted Verigin, without taking his eyes from the letter. "Is it possible for me to work out the destiny of the whole world when whispering vipers disturb my peaceful thoughts with God?"

A slight shuffling in the doorway; then silence, save for the crackling of paper and grunts from Verigin as he opened several more letters. He held a long envelope at arm's length.

"Ha! From Germany!" he exclaimed, extracting the crisp white letterhead of an insurance company. "What! Hitler writing again! One million times I have told that sukinsin I will not tell him what to do when he is trying to put the whole world in a war."

In the next few minutes he received an imaginary letter from Josef Stalin asking what to do concerning a canal in Russia; and

one as authentic from Prime Minister Mackenzie King, who wanted to know the best course to follow in the unemployment problem in Canada.

"Possibly when Stalin and Mackenzie King write to me again I will tell them something," he said, with a magnificent gesture. "Now I have no time." He strode toward the door.

The faithful melted from the doorway to cluster outside, where they bowed their heads when he passed, as if still oblivious of them. Then they went their respective ways to spread the news that "Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and Mackenzie King have been writing to Petushka again. But he would not tell them anything."

While Peter Verigin continued to befuddle the faithful and to play poker, despite the fact that he invariably lost money at cards, John Bonderoff sat ponderously in front of an old-fashioned Russian language typewriter in his farmhouse near Blaine Lake. Bonderoff had told his neighbors he had left Petushka forever and was writing an exposé of him.

On a December day, when a bitter north wind tore snow from the white fields and piled it in sepulchral drifts, John Bonderoff drove down the trail to visit his neighbors, the Bludoffs. To them he reiterated that he had never liked Verigin's ways, and was sorry that Petushka foolishly spent the money of the suffering people.

"My book," said John complacently, leaning back in the comfortable kitchen rocking chair and clasping his hands over his swelling chest, "will show the people what a terrible man Petushka is. I tell truthfully how he is all the time drinking vodka and traveling around the country spending money."

"But did you not go with him and help him drink the whisky?" asked Margareuita Bludova with a quiet smile. Margareuita was twenty-two and had won the highest aggregate in the University of Saskatchewan Farm Girls' Week judging competitions that year.

"Da, I went with him," admitted Bonderoff, avoiding Margareuita's keen eyes, and looking out of the window at the bare maple trees on which frozen seed pods rattled in the wind. "I had to go with him when I was secretary of the Named Dukhobors. But when I drank whisky with him I was only doing it to see if I could persuade him to stop. When I saw I could do nothing for him, I left him and decided to write about him in my book, *The Dark Shadow of Ivan the Terrible*."

"Suppose, when the faithful read your book, they turn away

from Petushka? Who would be their new leader?" queried Margareuita's brother Peter, who had studied engineering at the University.

"Well," John replied, "you know that I am like you. I do not believe in leaders. Each Dukhobor should be guided by his own conscience and reason."

"But if the faithful would need a new leader for a short time while they were learning to do without one?" Mrs. Bludoff, the mother, a stout woman with strong white teeth and a caustic humor. "Would you be that leader, John?"

"Well," hedged Bonderoff, reclasping his thick fingers over his stomach, "I would; that is, temporarily. Possibly I might sacrifice myself for the people, even though I don't believe in leadership."

The kitchen door squealed open on its frosted hinges, and Semon Bludoff, the husband, entered in a cloud of gray vapor. He greeted John and sat down to remove his rubbers and knee-length felt boots to which clung the smell of the stable.

After supper that night in the living room Peter Bludoff listened to the radio news broadcast and translated local and world events to the old folk. Then, in the bright light of the gasoline lamp, he studied a blueprint for a new wind-driven electric generator which would charge the radio battery. Margareuita sewed on a dress, to be put carefully away for next year when she hoped to attend the Technical Collegiate in Saskatoon. In her rocking chair by the red geraniums Mrs. Bludoff read Russian history, her lips moving with deliberation, silently framing each word. As a girl in Caucasia she had been one of four women able to read and write in her village. Consequently, her services had been much in demand when wives received letters from their exiled husbands. Her literacy, however, was not always pleasing to her husband, who felt neglected when everyone else was reading. Once he had burned her books. Now he snored on the red-covered couch. Bearlike, in winter he habitually slept ten hours out of the twenty-four, but when spring sunshine came to draw six feet of frost from the ground and the fields were ready to sow, he would be out of bed at four o'clock in the morning, to work until after sundown.

On a mat by the stove slept Jack, the mongrel collie, his brown forehead wrinkling and his hairy paws twitching, as if greatly concerned about something in a dream; with a philosophical sigh he relaxed to sink into the depths of sleep again.

One evening, a few weeks later, John Popoff, the rangy, bearded Son of Freedom, and his anemic wife came to visit the

Bludoff's. The Popoff's were the only avowed Sons of Freedom left in the Independent neighborhood of Slavanka. That night with tears in her pale eyes Mrs. Popoff told the Bludoff family how sorry she was for Petushka. Poor Petushka hated vodka, cards and fighting, but "he does these things only so that the government will not find out that he is Kristos."

The conversation veered to the subject of education, and John, a glassy light in his greenish eyes, said he did not burn schoolhouses, but that he was not surprised when such things happened.

And so the winter wore on in Slavanka district, with its routine of cutting and piling firewood, fetching straw from the snow-capped stacks in the fields, thawing out frozen pumps and hauling an occasional load of wheat to the elevators in Blaine Lake town.

On March 1, at 6:30 in the morning, John Popoff telephoned John Chutskoff that the schoolhouse was burning. Chutskoff roused the neighborhood by telephone, then ran to the fire. Flames leapt high in the crisp air, and there was no hope of saving the little building which had replaced the school that had been burned eight years before. John Popoff arrived on horseback to express his sorrow. The district was indignant. They had not finished paying for the school, and what would their children do for the remainder of the winter? And of course all the school books were destroyed. The police came, but could find no clues.

There were rumors among the Dukhobors that Paul Vatin, the starry-eyed fanatic from British Columbia, was roaming Saskatchewan.

In Kamsack, a few days later, Charlie Parkinson, the local gravedigger, with a pick and shovel over his shoulder, trudged through the snow to the cemetery by the edge of town. Charlie was thinking philosophically that it was no easy job to dig graves in frozen ground, and that more persons died in winter than in summer. He was walking with his head down, and it was not until he turned off the road to enter the cemetery gate that he looked up. At first he could not believe his eyes. The tombstones had gone. But no, they were not gone; they were lying in the snow, cracked and broken. He went closer. The granite headstone of the nearest grave lay shattered in a dozen pieces. Only two or three stout monuments were left standing, and these were chipped and dented as if struck many times with a heavy hammer. The snow was punched with holes, as if an enormous horse had walked through it. These were no ordinary tracks of animal or

man. The gravedigger cautiously followed them to the roadway, where they became indistinguishable in the shiny sleigh-runner ruts. With fear in his heart, he hurried back to Kamsack to tell the police.

While Police Chief Lazenby and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police searched the cemetery for clues, word arrived from Watson, one hundred and seventy-five miles westward, that the townsfolk had found their cemetery laid low. Then Pelly reported similar destruction. This queer sequence, coupled with the huge tracks, led to rumors of phantom vandals, who, with feet wrapped in burlap to prevent identification, rode horseback through the winter nights.

Paul Vatkin reappeared in British Columbia toward the end of March. When police questioned him he had on a new suit of clothes, more than a hundred dollars in his pocket, and alibis that he had left Saskatchewan three days before the graveyard desecrations.

In April, Vatkin lived in a tent in a Sons of Freedom camp near Grand Forks, where his fanatical eyes and involved sermons about God and Christ allowed him to enjoy the status of a minor deity. A mile from this camp was the highway bridge over which the school bus crossed the Kettle River. Early in the morning of May 2, when John Kuva of Grand Forks was riding his bicycle to work, he found the west end of the bridge enveloped in smoke. From a near-by farmhouse Kuva telephoned the police at Grand Forks. Police and firemen extinguished the blazing timbers and found that the three hundred-foot bridge would have to be repaired. Corporal John Hooker made plaster casts of the tracks leading from the bridge to the railway. At the Sons of Freedom camp they found Vatkin in his tent. He said he had not been more than a few yards from his tent that morning, and had not known of the fire until a woman had come to tell him.

The police investigated elsewhere, and learned that he had often been seen near the bridge early in the morning, and that he had purchased a quart bottle of kerosene from the Community store in Grand Forks, although he did not use an oil lamp or stove. On May 4, Corporal Hooker arrested Vatkin.

Sons of Freedom came to visit Vatkin in the police office, and he unwittingly gave the police further evidence. Constable MacIntosh—the same policeman who had tried the itching powder experiment, and who as a boy had learned Russian in Caucasia—took notes of Paul's conversation with the sons and daughters.

Vatkin: "The sisters must say I was sick that night."

Someone: "But you were not sick."

Vatkin: "It must be said that I was sick . . . they must say I did not go to the bridge as the police say . . . they must say that instead I visited them."

Someone: "Tell them you burned your shoes three days before."

Vatkin: "You must find me a lawyer. If there is no lawyer they will get me . . . when I go up for trial all of you must come . . . send a telegram to John Popoff to come with a lawyer. Find witnesses for me. . . . Send a telegram to Blaine Lake. . . ."

On June 15, although Vatkin's lawyer, Gordon Lindsay, pleaded not guilty for him, the jury found him guilty of setting fire to the bridge. In view of his many previous offences, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in British Columbia Penitentiary.

In Saskatchewan, John Bonderoff told the Royal Canadian Mounted Police he was scared that "someone" might do something to his house on Peter's Day. Thus on June 29, Constable Jack Love hid himself in Bonderoff's house, while the family went to the traditional Peter's Day picnic. While the constable waited, a man knocked at the door and went away. Half an hour later another man knocked and also went away. Then men broke into the house. When Constable Love challenged them, they hit him over the head. Half stunned, he drew his gun and fired, the first bullet going through the kitchen floor. As the men ran outside he chased them, firing four times. Before the constable lapsed into unconsciousness, he telephoned headquarters to say he was certain he had shot one of the men in the hand. While Love was taken by airplane to Prince Albert, the police spread a dragnet.

Three days later, in Saskatoon, city police arrested Sam Markoff and John Antifaev, two young Dukhobors of Langham district, while they were having their automobile repaired at a service station. Sam Markoff had gunshot wounds in one hand and a finger missing. They pleaded guilty to breaking and entering the house, and to the assault, and each was sentenced to the penitentiary. They admitted that Bill Kudikoff, a young Dukhobor of Langham, had been with them when they broke into Bonderoff's house, but they said that he had stayed in the automobile.

On July 30, Bill Kudikoff faced trial in Blaine Lake. So large was the inquisitive crowd of Dukhobors, who had deserted their harvest fields to attend the trial, that there was not nearly enough room in the magistrate's office. As no hall had been provided by

the Crown, the Dukhobors took up a collection and rented the largest dance hall in town, Magistrate Elder agreeing to hold court there. The stage became the judge's bench, and the hall was packed to its doors, while many stood outside.

Bearded young Joe Podnovinikoff, the same Joe who had been in the penitentiary for burning the River Hill schoolhouse, was called to the stand as a witness. When asked to affirm that he would "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God," he replied that God was always helping him. Joe testified that about noon on June 29, four men in an automobile visited the Podnovinikoff home. The four men were Sam Markoff, John Antifaev, Bill Kudikoff and Sam Antifaev. With hands folded under his beard, Joe admitted that the men had discussed doing something desperate to Bonderoff's house. From a political standpoint he agreed with the men who proposed to visit the Bonderoff home, but as an individual idealist he was against them. If anything was to be done he felt it should be done as "painlessly as possible." He was not an enemy of anyone, but he did not agree with Bonderoff's views.

John Bonderoff, cross-examined on the stand, said he thought when he left home on Peter's Day that there might be some trouble. When asked why, he blandly answered that he did not know. Further cross-examined, Bonderoff said, "There are a bunch of Sons of Freedom who do not like me. In meetings I often said I did not like the line they preach. I also do some writing and am editor of a Dukhobor paper published in Chicago." He also said he was writing a book, but that no one had read it yet.

Bonderoff had often told his neighbors that his book was an exposé of Peter Petrovich Verigin and that he feared Verigin might attempt to have his manuscript destroyed. But this he did not make plain in court.

Neither did Joe Podnovinikoff, an avowed believer in Petushka, nor any of the Dukhobor witnesses testify to Verigin's antipathy. Joe did admit that on the day when the boys called at his house they had all agreed that Bonderoff's "book" about Verigin should never have been written.

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CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

SINCERITY AND SLYNESS

IN FEBRUARY, 1937, delegates to the Independent Society of Dukhobors met at Buchanan, Saskatchewan, where Peter Makaroff was elected to attend the North American peace meeting at North Manchester, Indiana.

This mainly Quaker, Mennonite, and Church of the Brethren conference impressed Makaroff with its positive stand for peace. The Church of the Brethren, which had grown from a little group of eight Germans in 1708 to a membership of 160,000, now had seven colleges in the United States. While the Brethren laid down no decisive rules of conduct, they went on record that their members should not take "excess profits from industry or farming or excess income from securities which a state of war produces, except to build a fund for the furtherance of good will or to help support the families which may suffer as a result of their conscientious objection to army service."

On his return to Saskatchewan, Makaroff urged the Independent Society of Dukhobors to adopt a *positive* pacifist policy. "Whatever you do, don't sit back in negation and idleness, heaping destructive criticism on the heads of those who are trying to do something to lift our society out of the morass of hatred, contempt, suspicion and ridicule into which we have been sinking ever deeper and deeper within recent years. If we are to survive as a force for nonviolence and peace, we must redeem our good name from the ignominy and humiliation that has resulted from the disgraceful vandalism and outrageous hooliganism of misguided fanatics and irresponsible charlatans. Don't wait for someone to prod you out of your inertia, self-respect can be developed only through individual initiative and exemplary conduct of each."

Even as Makaroff pleaded for the end of vandalism, an incendiary torch flared through the night in Brilliant district. Before sunrise on Sunday, April 4, eleven buildings had been seared by it. British Columbia police went into the heart of the Dukhobor district with little hope of finding the incendiarists.

Michael Ribalkin, an Independent Dukhobor, living on his farm near Arran, Saskatchewan, was a victim of the same wave

of incendiarism. Reeve of the Rural Municipality of Livingstone, respected by Independent Dukhobors and non-Dukhobors alike, Ribalkin had advised Dukhobors to become British subjects and bring their children up to be Canadians.

Close by his new house, built the year before, was the old house in which his married son lived. Thirty feet away was the smaller dwelling of Grandmother Ribalkin, Michael's aged mother.

On a Tuesday evening the Ribalkin family returned from Benito town. After the cows were milked and the chores finished, the unmarried sons drove to a dance. About ten o'clock, Michael Ribalkin and his wife went to bed, and the grandmother and the young married couple went to sleep in their houses.

Sometime after one o'clock all three houses were on fire. Grandmother and the young folk escaped from their flaming buildings. Ribalkin and his wife were leaving their house when he opened the kitchen door and stepped on to the smoking-hot floor. The boards collapsed beneath his weight. He fell through into the cellar and flames now leapt up to lick at the nightclothes of Mrs. Ribalkin. She retreated to a window, smashed it with her elbow, jumped through, cutting her body in the jagged edges of glass. When the sun rose that morning her husband's charred corpse lay in the still smoldering ashes of their home. Mrs. Ribalkin recovered in the hospital at Swan River.

Police in neither province could secure evidence to convict the incendiaries. In British Columbia a delegation of three hundred Dukhobors met Sergeant Barber at Castlegar and requested police protection against further fires. As usual, they hedged when asked to co-operate with the police, although several admitted they had ideas concerning the identity of "some of those" responsible for the outbreaks. There were two reasons for this nonco-operation. One was their traditional antipathy toward the police and officialdom; and the other that they feared to testify in court lest their homes be destroyed in retaliation.

Peter Verigin derided the police for not being able to catch the culprits. At the request of the British Columbia government, he went to Victoria, where he told Premier Patullo that he himself went about in constant fear of his own life; he implored the premier to "catch the guilty ones and put them in jail."

Prime Minister Mackenzie King hinted that another Royal Commission might be appointed to look into the Dukhobor problem. But the wave of incendiarism subsided and the prime min-

ister left for England to attend an Imperial conference, and, later, to visit Germany.

While the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited sued six Community men for nonpayment of rent and assessments, Peter Verigin remained in the Brilliant district, drinking whisky and haranguing his officials. On April 23, he was charged with vagrancy. The charge arose out of his obstructing traffic and cursing in English and Russian on the Nelson-Castlegar highway.

In court, Alfred Erickson and his wife testified that Verigin's automobile had blocked the highway and forced their automobile to stop five times. Once the Verigin car had rushed past the Erickson car at a speed of sixty miles per hour on the treacherous mountain road. On each occasion Verigin had loudly cursed the Ericksons in Russian and English.

Called to defend himself, Verigin testified that he had seen a man peeking from under a canvas in the back of Erickson's car, and that he "thought they might be people who were setting fires." He denied being intoxicated, said he had no wish to block the road to traffic, admitted having used profane language, "but only because I could find no police to help me stop the suspicious-looking car."

After hearing the evidence, Magistrate West upbraided Verigin for running around the country, causing trouble and disturbing people, instead of setting an example of good behavior to the Dukhobors. "You have been here nine years and still cannot understand English. You have no business taking the law into your own hands." The magistrate sentenced Verigin to three months hard labor in Nelson Jail and fined him \$75.15.

Next day, in Saskatoon, when reporters interviewed Makaroff concerning Verigin's most recent conviction, Makaroff described Peter's behavior as "typical of the man who is irresponsible, temperamental and subject to fits of temper." He went on to say that Verigin, by his actions, had long ago automatically debarred himself from membership even in his own Named Dukhobors, according to that society's written constitution.

The Society of Independent Dukhobors, he added, wished once more to disassociate itself publicly from Verigin: "The Society has at no time recognized Verigin or the Verigin dynasty." The society had always been anxious to take advantage of Canada's

educational facilities and had shown interest in education generally. Its membership included medical doctors, many schoolteachers, several civil engineers, at least six chartered accountants, a number of dentists and pharmacists, and other university graduates who had not pursued professions but had returned to the land.

Joseph Shukin was shocked by Makaroff's statement when he saw it in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*. Abjectly, Shukin sought Makaroff in his office.

"You should not have said those things about Petushka," he said, shaking his head.

"They are true, aren't they?" Makaroff asked.

"Oh, oh, but it is terrible. You should not have said those things," Shukin repeated, as if he were saying a psalm, cold sweat gathering on his forehead. "If Petushka thinks I had anything to do with those words, he will curse me. I know I would die then. I know that you, Makaroff, know that those whom Petushka has cursed, have died, or they have become ill, or have found themselves in terrible trouble." Shukin was trembling.

"I am very well," said Makaroff, adjusting his glasses.

"Da, da, you are all right now. But you do not know what may happen."

When a reporter sought Shukin's views on Makaroff's statement, this extraordinary vice-president reiterated his astonishment. He, Shukin, could not even understand why Mr. Verigin had been arrested. He had done no harm. All true Dukhobors believed in him and were very sorry that he was misunderstood.

Asked his opinion of the most recent outbreak of burnings and bombings in British Columbia, Shukin replied that, as he had not been there, he did not know the details. He felt that it was the business of the police to catch those who did not obey the law and he was sure that law-abiding Dukhobors were very anxious to co-operate with the police. He knew that he personally would report any law-breaking incidents but as for knowing who had set a building on fire, he never knew. Poor Mr. Verigin went about in fear of his own life. It was very sad when Mr. Verigin was doing everything he could to help the people.

Shukin returned to Brilliant and at Verigin's orders on May 2, began evicting Community members for nonpayment of dues and assessments. The ejected ones left to swell the growing population of the Sons of Freedom villages.

On June 13, Verigin lost his appeal. Stories that "Christ" was

being persecuted by a harsh government spread, and on his second day in prison Tanya Resantsoff and Nastia Streiloff lay screaming on the pavement in front of Nelson Court House.

"You have our God in jail. Take us too," they cried.

When the two refused to get up or to stop screaming, they were arrested and put into a cell. Next morning, their ardor having cooled, they chose to pay fines of ten dollars each, in preference to fourteen days' imprisonment.

Verigin, who was permitted to confer with his secretary, William Soukereff, once a week, wrote a lengthy epistle, calculated to remind the faithful that he was still a deity. The letter was addressed to the Central Executive Committee of the Named Dukhobors:

DEAR BROTHERS AND FRIENDS,

I request that you, on a Sunday very soon, call together all the trustees of the Named Dukhobors and read to them this, my letter which is an appeal to all the dear brothers and sisters who are selected by God our Father and enlightened in Spirit by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. . . .

After several more paragraphs of "goddling" and "christing" in this vein, he referred to his own "holy and beneficent advice." And continued: Our present and temporary suffering cannot be compared with the Glory that it should bring forth. . . . Seek eternal life and God and His Truth . . . everything else will be added. . . . I am very glad and am thanking Jesus Christ that I am privileged to partake of his suffering, and by this also, Christ gave you opportunity to strengthen your faith. . . . Once more I ask you to be calm. Obey your Central Executive Committee. They communicate with me every day.

Belovingly and truthfully yours in the Lord Jesus Christ,
PETER CHESTIAKOV.

On June 28, Soukereff wrote to Peter:

All Named Dukhobors are preparing for celebrating Saint Peter's Day tomorrow, but we are very grieved that you are not among us and that you are instead in jail.

That is all that I have to tell you. With best wishes and greetings from God.

W. A. SOUKEREFF.

John Bonderoff demonstrated his return to the fold and alle-

giance to Petushka by a telegram and letters of felicitation: "Enemies confined your body but your spirit will be amongst the people always. Praying God for your well being," he telegraphed from Blaine Lake.

Many were the letters to "Dear Benefactor Peter Chestiakov," as at this time he preferred to be addressed, but the money gifts were of smaller amounts than during his previous imprisonments.

From Amsterdam, Saskatchewan, came a letter dated July 6:

VERY DEAR OUR BENEFACTOR PETER CHESTIAKOV,

We have not seen you for a long time, but we hear of your sufferings. . . .

Hail storm appeared and ruined all our crop of wheat and now not a single stem of wheat is left. . . . We had sown over two hundred acres of which one hundred and sixty acres was wheat. . . .

We would like very much to know about your health. . . . We are sending a present of one dollar. We love you.

Your children in Spirit,

JOHN AND AGAFIA AND SON ALEX, FAMILY OF POPOFFS.

Soukereff, not permitted to deliver fresh eggs and milk every day, wrote letters to Peter instead:

July 19. . . . The strawberry crop was not as big as we expected. In general the crop of all berries is nearly half less than last year. The strawberry jam is packed now, 3,139 boxes of strawberry jam and 72 barrels of pulp strawberry for compound. There is little sugar . . . Further funds for ordering sugar are not available . . .

There are no operations in the forests. . . . Delivery of logs from Grand Forks timber limit is very slow. . . .

The timber limit at Krestova is not being operated . . . there is no money to install the saw mill . . .

That is all I have to tell you today about the work of directors and Community. And it seems that matters are very serious and it is doubtful if they can go further.

With best wishes and good fortune to you from God.

Your servant,

WILLIAM A. SOUKEREFF.

Michael Cazakoff and the almond-eyed young Michael Chernoff kept Petushka informed concerning the Saskatchewan business:

Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited.
Verigin, Saskatchewan.
July 22, 1937.

DEAR PETER CHESTIAKOV,

Slava Bohu. Christ has Risen.

According to your instructions through W. A. Soukereff, I immediately, after receiving your letter, left for Yorkton and there together with N. M. Morozoff let all your buildings for repairs and painting, and soon as the work will be done we will mail a statement to you. [The buildings were five brick houses from which Peter collected rent to augment his personal income.]

Nik Morozoff inspected your hotel and found that the lessee keeps it in good condition. [The hotel, complete with beer parlor, that Peter built after he had been ejected from the Yorkton Hotel.]

Petushka, the Brothers of Evangelistic Faith asked me to write to you and find out for how much you could sell to them the meeting-house in Benito. They want to buy it for meetings. Therefore I request you to let me know for how much it can be sold, namely the concrete warehouse. . . .

Concerning the crops this year, I can say, that due to the drought the crops are very poor. . . .

Sincerely wishing you all good things in the world and sending my greetings,

Your Servant,
M. M. CHERNOFF.

Precious young Johnny Voiken "Verigin," of Grand Forks, Peter's grandson, who was being led to believe he might follow Peter as leader, wrote that he "decided not to attend high school for certain reasons."

I wish to inform you that we are all alive and in good health, slava Bohu. . . .

Grandmother and everyone here send greetings. The weather is very hot. There is no special news and I do not find a lot to write. So I am closing. I ask you please to pardon me if I have written something not right.

I remain always loving you,
JOHNNY.

John Bonderoff, who had a penchant for corresponding with well-intentioned idealists in many parts of the world, had received a letter from Paul Birukov's widow in Switzerland. The old lady urged that the Dukhobors send delegates to an Antimilitarist and

War Resisters' Conference to be held in Paris, from August first to fifth inclusive.

Bonderoff on receiving the letter wrote to Verigin's secretary Soukereff:

I think it would be very good to send a delegation there. . . . Would be very good if Peter Chestiakov could go there if his destiny will permit. I have read the letter [from Paula Birukova] at a meeting here and our people agreed with me that the question should be decided by Peter P. Chestiakov personally. . . .

It is a pity that this should have happened that Peter P. cannot have his freedom to do the work for the Society [Named Dukhobors]. Dark powers do always appear in his path. Satan works powerfully and puts sticks in the wheels of Dukhobors on all fronts. . . .

Tell Peter P. that I am terribly shocked about his imprisonment, even more than on former occasions. I understand what is happening to him and to all of us. He is struggling and nobody helps him. . . . He is right when he calls everyone hypocrites.

JOHN G. BONDEROFF.

When Soukereff showed Bonderoff's letter to Verigin, Verigin instructed the secretary to write directly to the old lady in Switzerland. Soukereff's subsequent epistle to Birukov's widow, explained at length how Mr. Verigin had planned to attend the war resisters' conference in Paris. But Mr. Verigin was unable to because he was being persecuted and was suffering in jail for his Christian beliefs.

Soukereff's letter, read to the conference, brought forth condemnation of the harsh Canadian government, and the criticisms were echoed in European peace and Christian periodicals.

Among various letters of condolence Verigin received from theistic promulgators was one from A. E. Pachota, mentor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Vancouver:

"News reached us that you are in jail. We wish to write to you that God loves you. God gave his only begotten son so that every believer will not perish. . . ." Then followed a series of quotations from the New Testament and further expressions of sympathy for Peter in his persecution.

Shafonsky, the White Russian ex-kapatan, who had written articles to Russian language papers extolling Verigin's virtues and who had so often enjoyed Petushka's whisky, expressed "sympathy and sorrow for your new suffering in Christ:

For the time being Dear Petrovich, God keep you well till we meet. Slava Bohu. . . . I believe everything that has happened is due to the Will of God.

Heartily yours,
W. SHAFONSKY.

To make certain that their leader would not be whisked from prison and sent out of Canada, the faithful posted their own guards, day and night, on the public streets surrounding the jail. On warm autumn afternoons they peeked through the jailyard shrubbery at him while he worked out his hard labor in the garden. And he, pretending not to notice them, limped and sighed in such a painful manner, that they felt more than ever sorry for this "suffering in Christ."

While Peter was yet in jail, Prime Minister Mackenzie King had, after attending the Imperial Conference in England, visited Fuehrer Adolph Hitler of Germany. Thus it was that soon after September 15, when Verigin was released from prison, he explained to the faithful that "Mackenzie King and Hitler" were responsible for his incarceration.

"I knew that Mackenzie King had plans with Hitler long before he went to Germany," Peter told his credulous followers. "Mackenzie King wrote to me asking my advice about his plans with Hitler. I told him to leave Hitler alone and not put Canada in a war. Mackenzie King did not want to listen to my advice but he was scared because he knew that I knew his plans with Hitler. So when he went to Germany he said to Hitler,

"Adolph, Adolph, what will we do now. Petushka knows everything?"

"Put the son of a bitch in jail!" said Hitler.

"For how long?" Mackenzie King asked.

"Three months," said Hitler.

"So Mackenzie King put me in jail for three months."

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

GHOST IN THE BASEMENT

ON PETER'S DAY, June 29, 1937, the followers of Peter Verigin in Saskatchewan observed the traditional religious holiday with two main assemblages; one on the picnic grounds near Blaine Lake, and the larger in the shadow of Verigin's Verigin mansion. Petushka was in jail in British Columbia, and after his followers had sadly observed the holiday, three hundred ultra-faithful men and women marched toward Nelson to protest his "cruel imprisonment." This parade the police dispersed with tear gas.

In Saskatchewan, on a grassy slope not far from Kamsack, the anti-Verigin Society of Independent Dukhobors sang the psalms of their ancestors, and, until late in the sunny afternoon, gossiped over their picnic lunch. Among the few hundred men, women and children, were the young Bludoffs from Blaine Lake, Andrew Katelnikoff from Yorkton, and Peter Makaroff of Saskatoon.

The next morning, about three hundred men and women of the Society of Independent Dukhobors assembled in the grandstand of the Kamsack exhibition grounds. They were to hear Peter Makaroff and various Independent delegates attempt revivification of the "society" which, since the military conscription threat of 1914-18, had lapsed into an unorganized state.

The day was hot, the noon sun beat down on officials and speakers who sat sweltering around a table at the bottom of the grandstand. With a fountain pen in his hand and some papers before him, sat Andrew Kalmikoff, chairman and president of the society. Florid-faced, paunchy, with thinning gray hair, dressed in a business suit, he resembled a Rotary club past-president. Besides him was Makaroff, peering at the papers, wrinkling his forehead; now and then lifting up his glasses as if they pressed too heavily on his nose.

Old Konkin, master of ceremonies, gray-haired, barrel-chested—great horseman who years before had driven the coach of Peter Vasilivich Verigin—stood up. In deep and pleasant voice he gave thanks to God, and asked that the meeting be opened with a

psalm. The bareheaded men, and the womenfolk—half of whom wore shawls while the rest were bareheaded or had on milliners' hats—rose up in the grandstand, and sang.

When the psalm ended, Borisenkoff of Blaine Lake district addressed the meeting. "We have abandoned Verigin because of his antics and drinking," he said in part. "Because of his personal behavior it has become impossible for us to have him as leader."

At this point young Nick Kalmakoff said he thought the young people should be given more responsibility in the society. Always the old folks were elected to the executive. A middle-aged man jumped to his feet and said that the young folk should not criticize. "Look at the dancing that went on in those halls at Kam-sack and Verigin after Peter's Day celebration. There was drinking, too."

"The old ones don't dance, but some of them won't stop at killing a couple of rams and gorging themselves with meat and liquor," a young fellow interjected amidst applause.

Borisenkoff regained the attention of the meeting and said that if things did not go well with the society, "we will only have ourselves to blame." He denounced petty squabbling and disputing.

"I agree with Borisenkoff," exclaimed a delegate from Verigin district. "And it is also my opinion that the young people are living a life of vice. I believe that our new organization should direct their lives along Christian ways—"

"Possibly the old folks can set an example," someone interrupted. "Or possibly the old folks will wait until they get the young folks straightened out before they themselves stop going to the liquor stores." Amidst laughter, the speaker sat down.

Makaroff spoke for the first time. "I think we are beside the point," he said. "We are only human beings and we cannot brighten ourselves up to shine like the sun. It is true that many public dances are not best for the morals of our young people. Dancing in a good environment and in moderation does no harm to the individuals concerned, and it does not hurt anyone else—"

Here a stout old lady in a black velvet Caucasian cap, her outstretched hand holding some short stalks of wheat, interrupted Makaroff's dissertation on dancing. Shaking the short wheat under his nose, she pointed with her other hand to the parched baseball field.

"Smotret! Look! Makaroff," she accused him in a high pitched voice, "that is what *sivilizatsia* has done. It has brought nothing

but hot sun and wind to the grass and to our crops. This year because more people turned their backs on poor Petushka, there was even less rain than last year. We will go on turning away from God until worse trouble overtakes us all," she thrust the drouth-stunted wheat stalks in Makaroff's hands.

"Spasibo, babushka! Thank you, grandmother," said Makaroff, as two men coaxed and led the old lady away from the platform.

Makaroff resumed his address. "In Russia, of olden days," he said, "we behaved ourselves in a way we thought Christian, but we did so because we were told to do so by rulers. It is good for all of us to live Christian lives, but each should decide for himself or herself the way that he or she should live. In the old days in Russia, a ruler decided it was best not to eat meat, so the people stopped eating meat. It would have been a better way if everyone had decided for themselves not to eat meat. When people do things just because they are told by a ruler, the actions of such people are not on sound foundation because the next ruler might decree something entirely opposite.

"Today in Canada," Makaroff continued, "we are the in-between people, and for us it is very hard. We have left the shore of blind faith in rulership, yet we have not reached the shore of independent thought. We find ourselves floundering in a sea of confusion between those two shores. That is why we are meeting here today in our Society of Independent Dukhobors. We, who are in it, know that we do not want to go back, cannot go back to the shore we have left. So we have formed ourselves into an association to help one another, hand in hand, to reach the other shore. . . .

"It is a task requiring much courage and moderation. To blame civilization and education for our troubles, is foolish. Education is necessary. We must learn to be both moderate and consistent. . . .

"I say we have surely only one of two choices. Either we must return to the most primitive life possible for existence, dispense with all the mechanical tools which are a result of education, become real Sons of Freedom; or else we must improve our minds in ratio to the improved machinery we use on the land, and shoulder our responsibility as citizens along with the other human beings living in Canada.

"When first we were in Canada, there were so many taboos that young men had only two ways left to enjoy themselves on Sunday—playing ball and disappearing to the bushes to squeeze the breasts of young girls," he said, amidst laughter. "So many

taboos naturally resulted in a repression that sooner or later burst forth and evidenced itself in actions that have shocked both ourselves and the people of Canada generally.

"There is nothing to be gained by hiding ourselves in a narrow sect with set customs dictated by rulers. But those of us who have decided on a certain way of life, should band together, subjecting ourselves to discipline in accord with the ethical code we have accepted. We are living in Canada, and we must make our adjustments."

Makaroff sat down to scattered applause. Peter Bludoff and his sister Margareuita agreed that he had made a sensible speech.

Andrew Katelnikoff remarked in English to his neighbor that Makaroff had spoken truly. "But I think not many of the people understood it," Andrew moved his bald head from side to side, half sadly, half cynically. "Pravda," he went on in Russian, "I watched them closely and it seemed to me they were more interested in the gophers than in Peter Gregorivich Makaroff's speech."

Down on the race track, beyond the speakers' platform, gophers scampered and played tag as if to provide a miniature fair-day spectacle for the perspiring people in the grandstand; the sun beat down relentlessly on the brown tufts of grass and emaciated weeds of the deserted baseball field.

Nick Popoff read a lengthy letter from Doctor Perverseff of Saskatoon, who said Dukhobors should not rest on past laurels. A Dukhobor educational program was necessary to offset patriotism and militarism engendered in Canadian schools. Popoff read on and on. The audience was restless and hungry. It was after one o'clock.

Along the dusty race track plodded a team of horses pulling a ten-barrel tank of water, several iron pails and a dipper jangling on its wooden deck. The driver stopped in front of the grandstand and unhitched his horses while men and women abandoned their seats to quench their thirst.

Andrew Kalmakoff, the chairman, announced the meeting would adjourn for a meal, and reassemble at three o'clock.

Peter Makaroff, Andrew Katelnikoff, and six young men comprising the Independent Dukhobor Chorus of Blaine Lake, with several others, accepted Jacob Kalmakoff's invitation to dinner. Kalmakoff, local oil refiner, hospitable, ruddy-faced, white shirt open at the neck, welcomed the guests to the long table set for twenty. Arranged invitingly on the table were fresh vegetables,

salads, cold fish and meat; and at each place was a cool bottle of beer.

Makaroff sat at the head of the table, while at the opposite end sat Victor Kaft, the Georgian. Kaft, one time chauffeur to Verigin, erstwhile Community schoolteacher, trapper, poker player, Communist promulgator, had long been associated with Dukhobors. He had fallen from favor with Verigin after having sued him for slander. At one time he had dressed himself Indian fashion; buckskin coat, beaded moccasins, and had kept sleigh dogs. It was said he belonged to a family of Georgian aristocrats. Now he styled himself leader of the Progressive Society of Dukhobors and spoke with noisy gusto of the way things were being done in Soviet Russia.

There was restrained merriment and some banter as the meal began, the beer further whetting the appetites of those who drank it. The conversation was light; Makaroff leading the joking and everyone laughing. But Andrew Katelnikoff, ever suspicious and watchful, noticed that Makaroff had not opened the bottle of beer set before him. Andrew did not mention it then, but he thought to himself of the many times he and Makaroff had enjoyed a glass of beer together. He knew Makaroff to be a reasonably temperate man, and wondered if Peter had decided to abstain from beer altogether. Or, did he ignore his beer today only to impress those present with his Dukhobor principles? If Makaroff is being hypocritical about it, thought Andrew, here is the beginning of the downfall of the new Dukhobor movement.

Victor Kaft, who had finished his beer but had so far said little, suddenly began what was to be a lengthy declaration concerning "the best course for the Dukhobors to follow." His hypnotic black eyes bulging from their sockets, Kaft warmed to his subject. He shouted, ceased to eat, waved his arms, fixed a fishy gaze on old Dan Konkin, the patriarch, beside him.

"It is necessary that each Dukhobor improve his knowledge of Russian language," Kaft roared in Russian. "The Society of Independent Dukhobors should start Russian schools right away," he pounded the white tablecloth with his fist in a way reminiscent of Peter Verigin.

"That," he went on, "is only preliminary to the Dukhobors migrating back to Russia where they belong. In Canada, revolution is sure to come yet. In Soviet Russia, they have had their bloody revolution. There the people and the government do not want war. Everything is quiet and peaceful."

Makaroff took issue with Kaft. He disagreed with the idea of moving back to Russia. He doubted if there would be revolution and bloodshed in Canada. "There is no necessity for such a thing here," he said. "The people can read and write; they have a vote. If we want to change the government here, we can do so constitutionally."

Kaft realized he had no support around the table, and subsided. The chorus entertained with folk songs. Makaroff looked at his watch. It was nearly half past three. The guests left for the fairgrounds to resume the meeting.

The afternoon session was opened by the chorus singing Russian folk songs. This animated singing prepared the way for the reading of a very long and involved "Constitution" of the Society of Independent Dukhobors. Makaroff had drafted the constitution at the request of the executive.

Now Nick Osachoff read it, his monotonous voice and tired face personifying the laboriously hesitant way in which Makaroff had prepared this ambiguous document of theology and politics:

The Society of Independent Dukhobors is, as the name suggests, a branch of the Dukhobor denomination. The term "Independent" was grafted to its name to distinguish the group from those Dukhobors who lived a Communal life in the so called Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. Following the death of Peter Vasilivich Verigin, and the formation of the Society of Named Dukhobors by his successor, Peter Petrovich Verigin, the term was retained to denote the independence of the society, both from the new leader and the Named Dukhobors. . . .

Society of Independent Dukhobors professes and strives to adhere strictly to the fundamental tenets of the sect. The Society is composed of those who hold similar views to the teachings in the Holy Scriptures and who maintain certain practices based upon these Christian teachings. . . .

Tradition traces the origin of Dukhoborism to the three men of Israel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego, whom King Nebuchadnezzar threw in a fiery furnace of ancient Babylon. The name Dukhobor is first mentioned in history about the middle of the 18th century when Dukhobors were victims of a barbarous persecution at the hands of the Russian government at the instigation of the Greek Orthodox Church. . . .

Because of their rejection of the corrupt authority of State and Church, their history in Russia is a record of inhuman persecution terminating only with their migration to Canada in 1899.

The faith and philosophy of life of the Dukhobors is based upon the teachings of Christ, admirably interpreted in the following three of their many psalms: 1. Seeing the Multitude. 2. Be devout. 3. Christ is calling sinful souls.

The essentials of our religion may be summarized as follows:

1. We believe in one Holy, Almighty, all-wise and everlasting God, the Father and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in one Holy Spirit preceding from Father and Son. It is written that God is Love. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. I will pray the Father and He shall give you another comforter that He may be with you in the Spirit of Truth," Christ said.

With still more quotations from the New Testament, the constitution went on to state belief in the "Divine influence and authority of the Bible." But Divine revelation had not ceased entirely. The Spirit of Christ dwelt in the heart of every man. Therefore, man-made churches were not necessary. All men were equal in the sight of God. . . . Worship of God was the highest act of which human beings were capable.

Truthfulness and sincerity were necessary at all times. Profane language, gambling, evil companionships, frequenting of public houses, were to be avoided. Intoxicating beverages, tobacco, narcotics, never to be used "excepting for purposes strictly medicinal."

Favor the practice of vegetarianism. . . . Against possession of fire arms.

Instruct children in knowledge of psalms, Holy Scriptures, and economics. Swear no oaths. Christ said, "Swear not at all." Dukhobors . . . have privilege of making an affirmation instead.

After much more advice that might have come from the mouth of Peter Vasilivich Verigin himself in Siberian exile, the constitution set forth how, when and why the executive should be elected. How members should be admitted to the society, and how they should be ejected. Marriage and death ceremonies were dealt with, as well as the registration of births. Members should not take their grievances to the courts, all disputes should be settled by a council of elders duly elected. No good Dukhobor could be a policeman or a judge.

If a member in good standing wishes to unite with some other body of Christians, the Committee of Elders may grant to him a letter

stating his Christian standing, whereupon his membership in the Society shall cease.

Throughout Osachoff's reading of the constitution which continued for more than two hours, Makaroff interspersed explanations in simpler language.

"Should we vote in elections for members of Parliament?" someone in the grandstand asked Makaroff.

"Yes," he said. "We should shoulder our responsibilities as citizens."

"Who should we vote for?" asked another.

"We should support candidates in municipal, provincial and federal elections whose policies are most in line with our principles," said Makaroff, whose remarks about politics were now interrupted by a baldheaded old man, Alex Mahortoff.

Mahortoff, standing behind Makaroff and facing the grandstand, in a reedy voice appealed that the meeting forget all politics, elections, constitutions. "Slava Bohu, let us only help one another." With a sob in his voice he spoke of another old man, Lebedeff, who was destitute.

"This old man Lebedeff suffered for us," said Mahortoff. "He suffered for us in the prison battalions in Caucasia. Suffered for our principles, helped build the bridge for us to cross, now he has nothing."

With tears in his eyes and trembling hands, Mahortoff took from his pocket a purse and laid a few pieces of silver on the table beside the loaf of bread, jug of water and jar of salt.

"Slava Bohu," he bowed, "I wish I could give more for Lebedeff who has suffered so much for our principles and is now old and uncared for. I truly thank Peter Makaroff for what he has done for us today. Slava Bohu."

Mahortoff's appeal started a trickle of silver and bills down from the grandstand to the table where the secretary busily recorded the amounts and donors' name in a school scribbler.

Some women, who had been drinking water at the tank wagon, threw pails of water over the first few rows of men in the lower seats of the grandstand. The men wiped it from their faces and clothes. When still more water was thrown on them, they abandoned their seats. The women were throwing water in accord with an ancient peasant custom, to help the rain come and so end the drouth in Saskatchewan.

Old Mahortoff, on the platform, taking this incantation as a

matter of course, kneeled down and touched his forehead to the ground. He requested all to bow low to the God within Lebedeff.

When he stood up, Makaroff resumed his talk. He said Dukhobors should make their position clear to the public.

"How can we expect to have sympathy for our wish for peace and disarmament when schoolhouses continue to burn in Dukhobor districts, and when other disorders break out?" he asked. "We first must put our own affairs in order."

It was still light, though after eight o'clock. Men and women who had abandoned the grandstand were conversing in small groups on the race track.

"We may as well smoke now," said a man, lighting a cigarette. "Possibly we will have to stop if we have that constitution. Like our people did in Caucasia when Peter Vasilivich Verigin ordered."

"*Mozyet!* Possibly! Peter Makaroff doesn't smoke. Will he be our new Petushka?" asked another.

"He has a choir traveling with him just like Peter Vasilivich."

"Only they are young men instead of the young girls," said a woman.

A newspaperman with more than a reporter's interest in Dukhobors, walked away from the grandstand toward a near-by clump of poplars, and he pondered the inexplicability of Dukhobors and of life generally. Through the poplar trees, deep green in their summer leaves, was a trail bordered with roses and prairie flowers, leading to a wheat field. On the edge of the field, he came on Andrew Katelnikoff, sitting under a tree.

"Oh, oh, what is good in this business of always bothering Christ and God?" began Andrew in English. "Surely God is already very tired of that talk in the beginning of the constitution. It makes me feel very sick in my stomach. Last night I ate watermelon and this afternoon I thought it was the arbus which made me feel sick. But now, I tell you truly, this evening I know it was the constitution."

"Pravda, I could stay no longer in the grandstand. So I came here by myself to sit in the bush and think a little to myself. And I tell you, I am very sure that if God will want to know what I think, I will not have to write it in a *konstitusia* for somebody to read aloud to the public."

"Those who heard the constitution, nearly all of them, were not thinking about what was written in it. They only hear a few words like, 'God, Christ, Lord, Holy Spirit and Ghost,' and all

the time they are watching the gophers chasing themselves. I wonder if Peter Makaroff himself understands that constitution he wrote," Andrew sighed. "Peter Makaroff is building a new house for Dukhobors, and already he is putting ghosts in the basement before the cement is dry."

The reporter reminded him, "You yourself were a delegate to the meeting, Andrew. Why didn't you get up and say these things in public?"

"No use," Andrew shrugged. "If I had said something, they would not understand. They would interrupt with another story about something else. Then everybody would think to themselves, 'Andrew, Andrew, coming here to disturb our peaceful meeting and saying not pleasant things.'"

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

DISINTEGRATION

NOISY BUT RAINLESS electrical storms punctuated the winds which blew first hot, then cold, over Saskatchewan's drouth-shriveled grain fields in the summer of 1937.

From louring clouds above Verigin village, abortive flashes of lightning illuminated the empty Community lumber sheds. Intermittent light and eerie shadows fell on the heap of abandoned steam tractors, their great iron bones rusting grotesquely in a dinosaurian-like graveyard of farm machinery. In the dilapidated bedrooms above the Community offices—where no one dared sleep lest lurking incendiaries set fire to the place—the storm disturbed the sparrows nesting beneath a fire-charred hole in the roof. Here the wind flapped a loose strip of sheet metal in broken staccato to the accompaniment of growling thunder. A dwelling fit to harbor ghosts of the "god men" whose egoism, feeding on the blind faith of the credulous, had brought Dukhobor affairs to their tragicomic state of confusion.

As the winds themselves, blowing where they listeth, Peter Verigin journeyed to and fro, from the prairies to the mountains; the fruitless blustering of his voice and the flashing of his yellow-gray eyes providing neither nourishment for the troubled souls of his followers, nor direction for the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited, which sank yet further into financial difficulties.

While impoverished Community men and women met in Verigin village to discuss the ever-recurring "what to do?" and sent telegrams seeking Petushka's advice—which when it came, was even more ambiguous than their own discussions, loan companies took legal action to foreclose on many acres of Community land in Saskatchewan. After thirty-eight years of frugal living and much hard work on the soil, the people were individually poor and collectively in debt. Their run-down homes contained little more than the bare essentials; a stove, table, benches, beds. The women still made their own clothing and stitched blue cotton overalls for their men. Few would permit as much as the smell of tobacco or alcohol in their homes, and seldom if ever did they

allow their children to see the motion-picture show in Kamsack. Yet for all their toil and frugality they had less to show than Canadian farmers who owned automobiles and radios, and who had, in the pre-depression days of agrarian prosperity on the prairies, taken an occasional pleasure trip to the British Columbia seacoast or even to sunny California.

Michael Cazakoff, the Saskatchewan vice-president and general manager, when asked by a newspaperman where were the fruits of patient labor, replied that he did not know.

"It is terrible," he shook his head mournfully, "but I would sooner not speak about it."

"But, Mr. Cazakoff, you must have some idea about what has brought the Community to the verge of bankruptcy? You have been a Community official since the Dukhobors came to Canada in 1898-99."

"Oh, oh, I am very sorry things are like this," his watery-blue eyes shifted around the Community office, as if on its drab walls he hoped to see written an answer. From his frayed suitcoat pocket he took his inevitable comb and flattened his gray hair down on his forehead in a v that pointed to the bridge of his nose.

"Yes, it is true that all my life I work for Community. Now I have 'notsing.' I would not like to say anything to put in the paper about where the money has gone, but I am very poor man. I have 'notsing,'" he reiterated.

It was Cazakoff and his aide, young Michael Chernoff, who wrote a petition to the government, which the faithful signed, pleading for "protection of our equity in the land we have worked for thirty-eight years. . . . Foreclosure proceedings being taken by the Sun Life Assurance Company and the Great West Life Assurance, if allowed to continue, will give us no security of tenure. . . ."

Supplications such as these found their way into the newspapers and aroused public opinion against the loan companies, impeding their collection proceedings, but nowhere did the faithful refer to Peter Verigin's inconsequential dictatorship of Community affairs, or the many thousands of dollars he spent each year in personal indulgences. Nor did the Community folk suggest that, had they become Independent farmers, they could have sought legal protection for their homes under R. B. Bennett's Farmers' Creditors' Arrangement Act.

While the Sun Life Assurance Company and the National Trust Company took legal proceedings to foreclose on property of the

Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited in British Columbia, non-Dukhobor Christians and Communists protested in the press; Churchmen on behalf of "these simple Christian folk"; and Canadian Bolsheviks in the interests of "these toiling farmers exploited by Capitalist loan companies."

In the *Clarion Weekly*, a paper directed by the Communist party of Canada, there appeared on August 20, an article concerning the "huge steal, involving property valued at \$7,000,000 that is being perpetrated against the Dukhobors." While the *Clarion Weekly*, in its hasty zeal to discredit the cruel Capitalist loan companies, failed to refer to the economic travesty within the Community, it bemoaned "the starvation facing these patient people." The article erroneously declared that "no conviction for incendiarism had ever been obtained against a Dukhobor."

While representatives of the mortgage concerns took inventory of Community property in Brilliant village, disturbed and befuddled Dukhobors milled around the offices and the jam factory, shouting about "the trouble that the government and sivilizatsia has brought upon us." When Staff-Sergeant Barber of the B. C. provincial police asked the people to disperse, they refused. They became angry and threatening; the police hurled tear-gas bombs into their midst. With streaming eyes they retreated.

Disturbed and disillusioned with things as a whole, still more Dukhobors left the Community, and carrying their small possessions on their backs, set out for one of the several camplike villages of the Sons of Freedom.

Of these villages the largest was Krestova, up-country and about twenty miles north of Brilliant. Krestova, bleak and mysterious, removed from arteries of travel, was atop a barren plateau above the Crescent River, a small but swiftly flowing mountain stream. Here about four hundred men, women and children lived in an unworldly atmosphere of negation, confused idealism and distrust.

Twenty-seven years before, the sandy soil of this mountain-rimmed plateau had been overlaid with a soft carpet of moss from which rose a forest of pine and spruce. The site had been one of the first cleared of timber by the advance settlement parties of Peter Vasilivich Verigin. Here he had built one of the initial lumber mills, several large Community houses of lumber, and one of brick. As the land had been cleared, apple trees were planted; but with the moss and forest removed from its surface the sand could retain little moisture. Strawberries were planted with some

success, but fruit trees failed. Gradually, the agriculturally ambitious abandoned the inhospitable site and moved down the mountainside and along the valley to the productive lowlands of Brilliant Colony. So, by 1932, those who had remained on the plateau were Sons of Freedom. In that year when the villagers paraded nude and were imprisoned on Piers Island, Krestova became almost deserted. They returned to reinhabit this out-of-the-way place where they saw hope of seclusion from the satanical interference of the Canadian government and civilization.

Krestova's population, augmented by men and women who from time to time left the Community settlements, further increased with the births of babies whom parents refused to register with the Vital Statistics Branch.

By now the never-painted buildings of old Peter were dulled and blackened. From many of the boarded windows the last fragment of glass had disappeared, and broken panes were stuffed with rags. To these large boxlike houses the Sons had attached rough lean-to shanties, their new shingles in contrast to the weatherworn boards of the old. The village generally was as unkempt as the inhabitants, who grew barely sufficient vegetables to supply their need for food.

Nyet, nyet—ne nuzhna; no, no—not necessary, on the lips of all, from small children to old grandparents. Governments were not necessary, wars were not necessary; schools, churches, permanent homes, marriage certificates, baseball, hockey, musical instruments, medical doctors, horses, clocks or pictures on the walls—all that and much besides was not necessary. Nyet, nyet . . . nyet, reiterated in a monotonous whine blending with the wind, which blew down from the mountaintops to moan through the village street. Sifting sand, rags fluttering in the makeshift windows, petticoats flapping on a few women bent with listless stolidity over a garden plot. Fatalistic shrugging of shoulders, negative shaking of heads—as if they wished to “nyet” themselves out of their pseudo-nirvana into a void of utter negation.

Even the Sons of Freedom zeal for brotherhood and the promised land had vanished. Because brothers and sisters stole food and clothing from one another, doors were kept bolted and padlocked; the “faraway place where we will all live happily” had ceased as a topic of hopeful discussion. When Dukhobors who were not Krestovans found their way along the steep trail which wound up the precipitous hillside to the plateau, they were eyed suspiciously as foreigners, word of their coming passing rapidly from mouth

to ear among the villagers. In a forlorn government schoolhouse at the entrance to the village, Walter Abrosomoff tried to teach a straggling class of eight boys and girls. They were all who could be persuaded to attend from about sixty children of school age. Abrosomoff, a thoughtful young Dukhobor of twenty-five, had studied in British Columbia University, and now this conscientious young fellow felt it his duty to bring education to the anti-pathetic camp. The eight youngsters attending his classes were not children of the "true Krestova Sons of Freedom." They were boys and girls of the "yet unenlightened ones whose parents will soon listen to us and keep their children from school." When Abrosomoff went into the village for a pail of water, or when during evenings he tried to reason with the folk, they reviled him, calling him a "government man, spy and sukinsin." They could accuse him of little else, for he neither smoked tobacco, drank alcohol, used profanity, nor felt the legs of young girls in the darkness as some of the Krestova men furtively did.

In the daytime, while Walter Abrosomoff struggled with his pupils, Matthew Thompson, a ruddy-faced Scotsman who had been a guard on Piers Island, snored in a government shack close by the schoolhouse. Each evening at seven o'clock Thompson put on his leather windbreaker, examined his flashlight, and went out into the chill mountain air, where he walked around and around the schoolhouse, allowing no one to approach lest they might have come to set afire the little building. At seven in the morning, the teacher, who slept in the school, awakened; and Thompson's twelve-hour vigil as government guard was finished for another day. Abrosomoff, aided by Thompson, tried several times to count the children to find out exactly how many there were, but hostile old folk thwarted each attempt by hiding the children in their cavernous houses.

In midsummer and autumn most of the younger men, together with many young women, left the village to find work in logging camps, and orchards. Before the cold rains and snow of winter came they returned to live a leaden-eyed, negative existence, enlivened only by gossip, sexual intercourse, and petty bickerings. Spring brought its seasonal revival of song and confused philosophizing about "what to do?" Also, in spring, more buildings in the lowlands went up in smoke.

One of the smallest Sons of Freedom villages, if village it might be called, was a few miles farther up the valley from Krestova. Secreted in thick forest along the west bank of the river,

about twelve young men and women and their children lived in an exclusive little group presided over by bearded young Joe Podivinovkoff. He was the Joe who had served a term of imprisonment in Saskatchewan Penitentiary for burning River Hill School, and who later appeared as a witness in the trial of the criminals who broke into John Bonderoff's house and hit Constable Love over the head. Before leaving Saskatchewan for British Columbia, he had married an alert and attractive young woman. There was a cheerful atmosphere about this group who possessed, so they said, "the true Sons of Freedom philosophy." No locks on their doors, no furtive smoking of tabak, nor profanity. The two new log houses were clean and bright. The children, neatly dressed, were taught reading, writing and arithmetic in both English and Russian languages. But in this elemental education they were instructed at home; they must not attend government schools. In one room of the largest single-story dwelling was a shelf of Russian and English books including several volumes by Tolstoy. Below the shelf was a desk for the English-Russian typewriter. On the wall hung the violin that Joe had brought with him from Saskatchewan.

The "Philosophy" of this small group was more positive and less befuddled than that of the Krestovans. "Yes, we too believe civilization is rushing toward catastrophe, but true Sons of Freedom must not resign themselves to despair." The Capitalist urge for profits from mass production, they said, was very bad; but the Socialist idea of increased consumption was little better. Technocracy was a Frankenstein plan to enslave humanity to engineers and machinery. The world should learn to get along with less and less of the products of civilization, eventually dispensing with power machinery, "an invention of Satan." Government schools warped the minds of children, so that when they grew up they scorned the land and went away to live unchristian lives in cities, possibly to join an army and even kill other humans in a war.

To a newspaperman who had crossed the river in a flatbottom rowboat—they had purposely built their village where there was neither bridge nor trail—they readily expounded their philosophy of life.

"We find that true progress is necessary," declared Joe Podivinovkoff, arms folded beneath his beard, cotton-clad feet spread wide apart. "Yes, it is true that Dukhobors think musical instruments are things of the Devil. But such a belief is fanatical. A

little music is very good for the soul. But it is necessary to be moderate in everything. . . .

"Pravda, we have one horse. You saw that that horse was fat. Also, when I took you close to his head and asked you to look into his eyes, you saw happiness shining in those eyes? Da, it is necessary to feed the horse well and not make him work too hard, and also it is necessary to think of him always as a brother and never as a slave. Some farmers give their horses much food and not too much work. Yet those same horses will not have happy eyes if the ignorant farmers are thinking of their horses as slaves instead of brothers. For the same reason that we cannot eat our human brothers we cannot eat meat of any kind when all animals are our brothers."

Joe suddenly ceased talking, and, as if deep in thought, looked down at his shoes woven of strong gray cotton cord. He could wear no leather boots made from animals that humans had killed.

The afternoon sun shone in warm rays through the south window. Outside, the stumps of the still clearing showed yellowish against the brown loam of a freshly dug garden plot, while along the rim of blue sky, the green tops of pine trees swayed in a light breeze.

"Katy," said Mrs. Pete Demoskoff to her daughter of about eight years of age, "run to the riverbank and watch the highway to see if Daddy is coming home from Nelson on the bus today."

"Yes, Mother," said Katy in English. Hand and hand with two more children she danced out of the room.

"Was Pete buying some things in Nelson?" the newspaperman asked.

"No, he was in jail there. But he was supposed to get out today," a young, brown-eyed man answered in a matter-of-fact way.

"What for?"

"Oh, for not sending Katy to the government school."

"Yes," added a woman with a peachlike complexion, "he was tried in court, and they said he could pay forty dollars fine or be in jail for four months, so he decided to take jail."

The newspaperman suggested to the Sons and Daughters that they were not very consistent. The bus that Daddy was expected home on was, indirectly, a product of education. So was the violin on the wall. So was the cotton cloth of the men, women and children. And the typewriter, books—even the steel axe heads used to fell logs for the cabins.

"But these things civilization has already produced, and we use them only as steps to the true and simple life," replied Joe.

"Then you believe that the means justify the end?" asked the visitor. "Was that Christ's belief? It seems to me that you should look to Mussolini and Hitler as your leaders. They advocate that the means justifies the end. But did Christ?"

"We are not as strong as Christ," Joe said.

"Even so, do you think it is right that you should use things which are only possible because of education and schools, and at the same time refuse to have your children educated, and set fire to the schoolhouses that indirectly make it possible for you to wear the manufactured cloth you have on?"

There was silence for a moment. The children returned to say that the bus from Nelson went by, but it didn't stop.

"He will be coming tomorrow," said Katy's mother, caressing the child's blond curls.

"Yes, Daddy will be coming tomorrow," echoed the child.

"We, as human beings, have much to learn," said Joe with knitted brow. "It is necessary that each listen carefully one to the other. Much discussion is necessary if we are to know the truth. It is very hard to do everything as quickly as we think. Even birds cannot fly as fast as that."

"You—" pointing to the newspaperman—"understand very well the Sons of Freedom philosophy. We ask you again to stay with us now and through the winter, so that all may learn from one another."

"But I have to finish the Dukhobor history that I am writing," the newspaperman replied.

"Yes," smiled Mrs. Podnovinovkoff, "we also know the book will be very important. You know we want to have a true history of Dukhobors written. And you could finish it here."

"Yes, we would help you," a Son nodded.

"If I should bring all my notes here, would you promise not to burn them?"

"You know that it is not possible for Sons of Freedom to promise anything or to take oaths," Joe replied seriously. "But we would not want to burn those notes. We want to help the history."

"I believe you all feel that way this afternoon. But, Joe, you told me before, no true Son of Freedom can be certain how, exactly, the Spirit of Christ will guide him in the future. Suppose that later the Spirit moved you to burn my notes? What would you do?"

"Well, if the Spirit truly moved me to do it, then I would have to burn them," replied Joe, adding that he felt sure the Spirit would not.

So the newspaper reporter looked at his watch and saw that he still had time to catch the southbound bus to Nelson. The Sons and Daughters, and the children, accompanied him across the clearing and through the lane of trees to the riverbank, where they shouted cheerful good-byes and "come again soon," until he pulled the rowboat up on the opposite bank and waved a last "*dosvedaniya*."

In Grand Forks district, a fraction of a mile from Washington State boundary, was the Sons of Freedom village of Gilpin where, on deforested land which had reverted to the government, lived fewer than one hundred persons. The inhabitants had built a rough irrigation system, worked the sandy soil by hand, declined the use of horses but kept several milk cows. They paid no taxes, refused to register births, deaths and marriages, and one of the children attended school. From this village of Gilpin, rumors of "free love" and sexual promiscuity seeped to the outside world.

When Constable Hooker and Deputy Registrar Winslow entered the village in an attempt to list the names of those residing there, four women stripped in their presence.

"Now register us," said a buxom woman with calm defiance. "We were born into this world without names or clothing. We live in the Spirit of Christ. We still have no names and now we have taken off our clothes."

It was in an effort to ascertain who was married to whom in the Sons of Freedom villages, and also to persuade the parents to register the births of their children and generally comply with the laws, that Hugh Winslow had been employed by the British Columbia government as a deputy registrar of births, deaths and marriages. Winslow, a Russian-Turk who had escaped from Russia during the civil war following the Revolution of October 1917, had, on coming to Canada, changed his name. (Alexander Vishnevski was difficult for Englishmen to pronounce.) His father had been attached to the Imperial embassy at Constantinople, and since the Revolution, Winslow had lived in almost every country in Europe. Born, nurtured and exiled amidst an atmosphere of intrigue, the semioriental mind of this softly spoken, dark-eyed, slightly built diplomat, had been able to adjust itself, first to the exigency of teaching Russian in a school in the Community, with the acquiescence of Peter Verigin, and later to the expediences of

Canadian politics and then to the bottomless philosophizing of the Sons of Freedom.

But though Winslow assured the Sons and Daughters that he well understood them, they answered him with a stubborn "we know you too, Alexi." They called him a government man, spy, agent of Caesar and Satan; pointed out that he resembled a Turk and smoked cigarettes.

To assist the work of Mr. Winslow, and, further, to "thoroughly investigate the Dukhobor problem," the British Columbia government sent Mr. Pickle from Victoria to Nelson. Pickle, a Liberal party supporter, was a man of such enormous bulk, and of such mentality, that he might easily have been mistaken for a commercial traveler. He spoke Russian, had learned it as a boy in Tsarist Russia where his father, a Scotsman, had been in business. No lesser authority than Pickle himself said "all Russians are mad."

"Now if these Dukhobors were Germans instead of Russians, we wouldn't have any trouble with them," said Pickle to Winslow across the snow-white cloth of a dining-room table in the Hulme Hotel at Nelson.

"But they are not Germans," Winslow objected with quiet emphasis.

"Well, I guess you're right there. If they were, they'd act more sensible than they do." Pickle prepared to attack a large steak which a slim-waisted waitress had brought to him. "Now, my solution for the Dukhobor problem," he proceeded with an air of finality that a salesman assumes when about to close a prospect, "is that the government scatter the Dukhobors across Canada from Vancouver to Halifax. Give each family some land in return for the land they now have here, but don't let any family live closer than a hundred miles to any other family. Scattered like that, they could be watched, and they wouldn't be able to get together for burnings and nude parades. What do you think of it, Winslow?" Pickle thrust forward his head, the folds of his neck momentarily ceasing to bulge over the back of his collar.

"Such would not be a solution, I think," Winslow tapped his cigarette with the subdued grace of the Orient. "Such a move, I think, would appeal to the, er—how do you say in English?—the er, martyrdom complex of the Dukhobors. Dukhobor messengers would go from farm to farm across Canada, and as a result, on a certain day, all would let the world know of their religious beliefs

and persecution by a demonstration. Such as abandoning their new farms, for instance. Only more trouble could result."

Pickle was not convinced by Winslow's reasoning, but he broached another scheme that would cost the government less money. He would move the Dukhobors out of British Columbia and settle them in a frontier area, say the Peace River country of northern Alberta. There they would live under Dominion government supervision on a Dukhobor reserve, as the treaty Indians lived on Indian reserves. The government would have to appoint a minister of Dukhobor affairs, with jurisdiction similar to that of the minister of Indian affairs.

"I think such a plan would not be fair to the children, who would have no opportunity to see for themselves the outside world," Winslow replied. "You know, there are children of even fanatic Dukhobors who become, er, good Canadian citizens. But if all the young children and those yet to be born were held in a reserve or concentration camp, they would not have opportunity to adjust themselves. Therefore, I think, such could not be a solution."

"They're costing the government too much the way they are now," said Pickle, who himself was receiving \$225 per month, a car and expenses for conducting his "thorough investigation."

Pickle continued his peregrinations back and forth between Nelson and Brilliant, admonished the Dukhobors for their unbusinesslike behavior, and interviewed Peter Verigin. He sent reports back to Victoria.

On November 9, in the British Columbia legislature, Captain C. S. Leary, Liberal member for Kaslo-Slocan, proposed to the House that members of the Russian religious sect of Dukhobors, now settled in the Kootenay country of British Columbia, be moved to the Peace River country and there confined to limited borders. "They should be denied the privileges and freedom of naturalized citizens until they, themselves, show their readiness to become citizens by conforming to our laws," Captain Leary declared.

It would seem that the legislative member had not considered the consequences which might follow should the government institute his proposal and thereby establish a dangerous precedent. The member seemed unaware that should the Dukhobors be dealt with by an arbitrary administrative order abrogating constitutional law, such a precedent might pave the way for suppression of other

religious and political minorities in Canada. As Captain Leary had not put his proposal in the form of a resolution, it was not voted upon in the legislature.

On the staff of the British Columbia provincial police in the Kootenay country were men whose years of experience with the Dukhobors had given them an insight into the affairs of these people. Yet the patient work of some of these policemen was too often undone by unenlightened politicians. When, however, the government eventually became convinced that Pickle might be doing more harm than good in his role of "thorough investigator," he was recalled.

It was not long before the stout Pickle reappeared in Nelson, where he reensconced himself in the Hulme Hotel and resumed his travels forth to Brilliant and back to Nelson, now as a "special collection agent" for the Sun Life Assurance Company.

Though the thirty government guards, who had been stationed at railway and highway bridges, were withdrawn in August, because of government lack of funds, guards still remained at the schoolhouses. Property depredations in Dukhobor districts of British Columbia and the prairies totaled more than two hundred and fifty up to October, 1937. Seventy-five schoolhouses had been destroyed by fire, twenty-five schoolhouses were damaged by fire or explosives, while one hundred and fifty houses, halls, barns, bridges, churches and other buildings had been set afire. Out of two hundred and fifty instances of alleged incendiarism, the courts had obtained less than twelve convictions, and all but three of these as a result of circumstantial evidence. The lone instance of an officer of the law catching a Dukhobor red-handed in an attempt to burn a building was in Saskatchewan. There, in Blaine Lake district, Constable Wood of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, one night hid himself behind the door of a church near Ottawa School and apprehended Bill Voiken, a Son of Freedom, with a fire machine in his hands. Constable Wood had been informed by Independent Dukhobors that Voiken might attempt to burn the building that night.

As a contribution toward the work of regenerating the Dukhobors of British Columbia, the United Church of Canada retained the services of Howard Trevor as missionary. Trevor, a White Russian who had changed his name from Snezerev, was aware of the difficulties besetting his new role of missionary. Yet he was not prepared to admit the futility of persons of non-Dukhobor

lineage proselytizing among the Dukhobors. However, his patience was commended, in a Mission Board report, "in face of superstition, illiteracy, fanaticism, and servile obedience to a leader whose influence is not helpful in assisting these people to take their rightful place as citizens of their adopted country."

Kanadsky Gudok, a Russian-language, Communist-directed tri-weekly paper published in Winnipeg, had the largest circulation of any Russian-language periodical among the Dukhobors. Subscribers who could read, read it to those who could not. It was read aloud and criticized even by Sons of Freedom in the unworldly village of Krestova. In *Kanadsky Gudok* that which especially appealed to the Dukhobors was a page or more under the caption, "Dukhobor Life" edited by Nick Popoff, himself a Dukhobor and first secretary of the Progressive Society of Dukhobors.

Meanwhile, as politicians, churchmen, radicals and various individuals offered solutions for the Dukhobor problem, Peter Verigin, throughout the winter of 1937-38, played poker in Yorkton and Kamsack. As usual, he lost many thousands of dollars. Despite his losses, and poor grain crops and low prices for farm products, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited was able to pay \$10,000 into court at Yorkton, thus staying the final foreclosure order of the Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada Limited and the Great-West Life.

Almost simultaneously, Verigin found money to fight the lawsuit brought against himself and the Community by ex-Senator Hackney. Hackney himself appeared in King's Bench Court at Yorkton. He claimed his services had been retained by Verigin acting for the Community in connection with the Mexican real-estate and Dukhobor exodus fiasco. Verigin, Hackney told the court, had not lived up to the agreement. Therefore he, Hackney, was entitled to \$750,000 commission on the deal which had failed because Verigin had not kept his word. The theatrical Morris Chutorian, who took the stand as a witness for Hackney, eulogized the luscious grasslands of Mexico, where 40,000 head of white-faced cattle browsed contentedly in a veritable cows' paradise. Morris had seen them with his own eyes. Yes, that was wonderful fertile land that Senator Hackney had selected for the Dukhobors.

Peter Makaroff, acting with Carl Stewart, K. C., in Verigin's defense, likened Hackney to an automobile salesman who, after demonstrating a car to a prospective customer and failing to make a sale, then sues for the gasoline used in the demonstration.

Andrew Katelnikoff took a week's holiday from his carpentering to sit in the crowded courtroom. He enjoyed litigation of this sort much more than he did the Saskatchewan Drama League plays, in which his neat and lively daughter Nena acted annually.

There were more than 4,000 documents, including some five hundred telegrams, filed in the case, and witnesses were present from faraway places like Texas and Mexico. So involved was the lengthy testimony and evidence that judgment was deferred. When, eventually, Judge J. F. Embury of Regina gave decision, Hackney lost the action. But the North American real-estate promoter was awarded judgment against the Russian religious leader to the extent of \$11,300, this sum being the total of amounts Hackney had advanced Verigin to promote the land deal. The sum was offset against the general costs to be borne by the plaintiff, the result being that Hackney received nothing.

Verigin returned to his poker parties. Soon, however, his name was to echo in court again, in connection with card playing. It came about through Russell Popoff, Verigin's intermittent chauffeur, interpreter and general aide. The dapper Russell had been unable to collect his full commission from several professional gamblers whom he aided in their plans to part Verigin from his money. Thus the young Dukhobor informed the police that three men were using marked cards to obtain Verigin's money. The three known to the local poker fraternity as "Indian Bill," "Bill the Barber" and "Red," were charged in Yorkton police court with conspiracy to defraud and cheating at play. On the witness stand the ferret-like Popoff unashamedly told the court that while he was "Verigin's friend," he was to have received ten per cent of the winnings of the accused for bringing them together at cards with Verigin. The "gamblers," Popoff said, had at first paid him his commission, but later they had refused. It was "Red" who had first objected to continuing the payoff. Then Red had showed him how to read the marked cards and had said that after a few more lessons Popoff could join in the games and get his profit along with the rest of them. But Popoff had insisted on his commission, he told the court. Cross-examined on the witness stand, he related how Mike Chernoff, the secretary of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood at Verigin village, had telephoned to him (Popoff) saying that Peter Verigin was on his way to play poker at Kamsack. Popoff then quickly passed the information on to the three gamblers and all set out for Kamsack, where a game was soon started.

Magistrate S. H. Potter, in dismissing the case against "Indian Bill," "Bill the Barber" and "Red" referred to the cardmen as "a pretty set of rascals revolving around the orbit of Peter Verigin." The magistrate remarked that Russell Popoff was far from being the best of them; that he found it difficult to believe that Popoff would tell the truth and that he regretted it was not in his power to assess the informant with the costs of the action.

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CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

REVELATIONS: TO 1940

BORSH SOUP, THE STEAM BATH, and pickled cucumbers now remained the only three things with which the Dukhobors were in unanimous accord. Concerning the merits of anything other than that wholesome trinity, agreement existed neither in creed, belief nor activity. Most of the 17,000 persons of Dukhobor lineage in Canada, however, continued to refer to themselves as Dukhobors, while adherents of the various factions within the Community folk, Independents, and Sons of Freedom, were disposed to consider themselves the only "true Dukhobors." Such, in 1939, was the state of disintegration and flux of this formerly impenetrable sect.

Pacifism in its negative form of antipathy toward soldiering, war and the killing of human beings, was almost as general among them as was their partiality for borsh, dills and Ruski banya. But among the 1,200 Canadians who volunteered to fight *Germanski* and Italian Fascism in Government Spain were three young men of Dukhobor parentage.

While all the Community folk and Sons of Freedom, together with a minority of Independents, distrusted, in varying degree, "governments," or at best considered them unnecessary, most Independents interested themselves, as average Canadian citizens, in municipal, civic, provincial, and federal administration. It was significant that while a number of politically minded Independents were aligned with the Liberal party, none had joined the Conservatives. The majority looked to the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation, while a small minority attached themselves to the Communist inspired Progressive Society of Dukhobors.

A few individuals and several families, affiliated with the Society of Independent Dukhobors, tentatively supported the United Church of Canada. They declared that should they "ever join a church it would be the United Church because in it there is more room to do your own thinking." None were attracted by the Roman Catholic Church or the Anglican Church, "because those churches are much the same as the Russian Orthodox Church of old Russia." To venturesome young intellects in search of ever-

elusive truth, Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science failed to appeal: "for the reason that it is better to prepare for the worst, instead of attempting to abolish the evil in the world by imagining that it does not exist. . . . Even though we do not like it, it is necessary that human beings learn through suffering." Six or eight young men and women with university education, philosophized and reasoned their way into a belief in reincarnation. They found, in that theosophical concept, a theoretical answer to the eternal question of where do we come from and whither do we go? "The theory of reincarnation gives logical support to belief in the existence of a God or Supreme Intelligence, a universal law of compensation and ultimate justice—as yet not revealed to us." These few reached a conclusion that the principles of Christ, Buddha, Confucious, and other exemplary men were identical in essence, but organized religions had "twisted their original teachings."

"Jesus Christ" was, however, held in high regard by Dukhobors generally, whether they believed that the "Spirit of Christ resides in Peter Verigin," or that Christ's divinity was separate and apart from Petushka's or that "Peter Verigin is a travesty of both divinity and ordinary human decency," and "Christ set an example on earth that the world has never been able to follow"; or, as the Communist-inclined youth regarded him, "Christ was a revolutionary who strove for the oppressed masses."

When eager young minds met on the campus or in the country to discuss about themselves and the peculiar history of their people in relation to a baffling world of unemployment, dictatorship and war, they were cautious, even skeptical, about quoting Christ. Both the sly and hypocritical Peter Vasilivich Verigin and his profane and tempestuous son, Peter Petrovich, had so reiterated and prostituted the word "Christ" that it required a conscious effort on the part of the young folk to disassociate the sanctimonious and ludicrous "Christ" from the Jesus Christ their intuition and reason could accept.

Amidst the spiritual and economic confusion of the Verigin followers, the traditionally strict monetary honesty of the Dukhobors had fallen. No longer was a Dukhobor's word to pay a debt considered as good as his bond. Hancheroff, the Dukhobor merchant in Canora, Saskatchewan, preferred on his countercheck slips the names of non-Dukhobor farmers to those of his own people.

Isolated instances of stealing—thievery by Dukhobors had been

unknown in Caucasia and the early days of settlement in Canada—echoed in the law courts:

Special to the *Free Press*:

YORKTON, Sept. 23.—(1938) With three previous convictions against him, Mike Chernoff, Arran farmer, was sentenced today to one year in Regina Jail after a King's Bench jury found him guilty of breaking and entering.

Mr. Justice Taylor passed sentence when Chernoff was convicted in connection with the theft of seventy-five bushels of oats from the granary of Sam Korluke, neighbor of the convicted man.

A charge of attempting to receive relief under false pretences against Samual Chernenkoff, farmer of the Pelly district, was dismissed by Mr. Justice Taylor after hearing evidence of the prosecution.

Chernenkoff was alleged to have mistated his circumstances in order to get relief from the St. Phillips Rural municipality last fall.

Though Dukhobors in both Saskatchewan and British Columbia had been on government relief, and while in Community villages there was no set age for the retirement of the old folk, myths concerning the Dukhobor mode of life continued to appear in print. John Murray Gibbon, in his beautifully illustrated *Canadian Mosaic*—a book-length essay on racial and national groups in Canada—wrote: "Any Community Dukhobor reaching the age of sixty may retire from work if he chooses with full board and lodging, and none have gone on relief, although unfortunately many have gone to jail."

As with most rural people, Dukhobor grandmothers and grandfathers busied themselves with household and farmyard chores until they were ready for the grave. Blaine Lake town had become an Independent's "Victoria" for that district. Here lived dedushka and babushka in a state of semiretirement, but years of industry necessitated that they keep a cow, chickens and a garden. In summer they visited the "young ones" on the farm, where they insisted on working insofar as their physical strength would allow.

Community old folk "retired" in the villages. One of the more inviting of these was an early British Columbia village on a hill-top overlooking the Community office of Grand Forks Colony. Here in a clean and neatly kept room on the ground floor of a large old house lived Nikolai Zibaroff, now seventy-eight years of age. In accord with the tradition of Peter Vasilivich, there were neither pictures nor designs on the gray-blue walls of this room

furnished simply with a bed, a home-woven rug, two chairs and a table. But on the white-draped little table by Nikolai's bedside were two photographs in gilt frames; one of Peter Vasilivich Verigin and the other of Peter Petrovich Verigin. In the margin around the lower part of the photo of Peter Petrovich was a sprig of red-tinted roses and beneath the roses, on which the thorns were not visible, were printed the words, "Toil and Peaceful Life. Slava Bohu."

Nikolai and another old patriarch worked leisurely in garden and orchard, stopping now and then to rest on their hoes, and talk in Russian of apples, arson and Christ; to reminisce, at times, about Caucasias and the early days of settlement in Canada.

On a September afternoon, when the sun was creeping down toward the western rim of the mountains, a newspaperman found Nikolai Zibaroff picking apples in an orchard on the hillside below the village.

"Da, da, *Ya pomnyet*; yes, yes, I remember very well the Thunder Hill Colony," the old man nodded, a light of interest appearing in his eyes. "Da, da, Leo Alexandrovich Sulerjitski! A very nice man who was always helping us, slava Bohu. So you are journalist, a little writer? Tak. Some writers are very good men. Leo Nikolaivich Tolstoy, he was a great writer. He is dead now. Tak. Everyone must die, like the leaves of these *yablok* trees. But in the spring fresh buds come again. . . . Let us go to the village, where we will sit in my room. Pozhalosta, will you accept an apple? Fruit is much better than meat."

Along the winding lane which led up the hillside they walked, the red fruit hanging overhead and fallen leaves rustling underfoot.

The room was as quiet and cool as the very white spread on Nikolai's bed. The two Verigins looked out from their gilt frames and an alarm clock ticked beside them. A little girl with fair hair and a small boy with blue eyes and close-cropped head peeked in the open doorway.

"Maria," said Grandfather Nikolai, "ask mother for some watermelon for our *gost*. And bring a paper bag with plums, so that he will have them to take on his journey."

"Spasibo Dedushka; thank you, Grandfather," the child answered, the boy bowing with her.

The old man talked on about the first years of settlement on the prairie. Yes, Saskatchewan was a good place to live in, even though it was very cold in winter. The Dukhobors would not have

moved to British Columbia if the Canadian government had not taken the land away from them.

"When we came to Canada the government told us we could have the land for ninety-nine years free of taxes, and the government told us that we would not have to be subjects of the English King. These things Queen Victoria told Petushka [Peter Vasilivich Verigin]. But when we had worked on our land in Canada for three years, the government started breaking its agreement, and things were very bad." The old one shook his head sadly.

"Do you recognize Peter Petrovich Verigin as your leader now?" the newspaperman asked.

"Da."

"Is it true that Peter Petrovich hits people with his fists, gambles at cards, eats meat, drinks vodka, smokes tabak and curses?"

A look of hurt surprise came over Nikolai's weathered face. For a long moment he was silent. Then, with a faraway stare in his faded eyes, he said that he himself had not seen Petushka do all those things.

"What Petushka does is his business. It is not for me to say what he should do. But he is our leader, and we do not know everything."

In a house on a brown hillside a mile or more away—the house that had been the Grand Forks residence of Peter Vasilivich Verigin—lived the aged Dunia, mother of Petushka, whom old Peter Vasilivich in his youth had abandoned for Lukeria Kalmikova in the Wet Mountains of Caucasia. Petushka's wife, Anutka, lived there also, and on the rare occasions when he honored them with visits, he paid special attention to his grandson Johnny "Verigin." So sure were the old folk that the knowing lad would be the "next Petushka," already they called him "Peter" instead of Johnny.

In the fall of 1938, Peter Petrovich Verigin, troubled with sharp pains in his chest, went from Nelson to Vancouver, where doctors advised a surgical operation. He left the hospital there, groaning and cursing his ill health, the doctors and the nurses. In the Grand Forks and Brilliant colonies he stayed long enough to instruct his Community officials in "bookkeeping," after which he journeyed to Saskatoon. There in St. Paul's Hospital, attended by Doctor Perverseff, three infected ribs were removed. Fearing that his end might be near, he had sent for "little Peter" Johnny Verigin. On New Year's Eve, as alert young Johnny stood respectfully by his bedside, Petushka spoke barely above a whisper.

The operation, however, proved such a success that within two

weeks he was feeling so well that he threatened, a second time, to sue the hospital for \$200,000. He had sent for his Blaine Lake aides; John Bonderoff, Alex Chevaldaeff, and Shafonsky, the White Russian. While they stood attentively at his bedside he exhorted them to form a Dukhobor association, which would be known as the "Spiritual Community of Christ." A membership in this new organization was to be three dollars per person, and no Dukhobor who received government relief or who was a British subject would be admitted.

The trio returned to Blaine Lake where Shafonsky addressed a small meeting of the faithful, who received the "Spiritual Community of Christ" proposal with an enthusiasm barely warmer than the sub-zero weather.

Peter left the hospital, only to return again early in February, 1939. When his strength permitted, during visiting hours, he ordered his Community officials and his cunning and frightened satellites to stand at the foot of his bed. Still master of profanity, he loosed in their ears such expert torrents of abuse that, on one occasion, even John Maloff's face reddened painfully.

One of the Roman Catholic sisters passing by in the corridor asked a nurse, with some irritation, "Why does Mr. Verigin have to shout like that?"

"He has told us," the nurse answered, "that when he raises his voice at those men, he is saying a Dukhobor prayer for the salvation of their souls."

While Verigin ranted and raved from his hospital bed, his faithful visitors and hangers-on bowing and thanking him for his abuse, young Dukhobor men and women in Saskatoon went quietly about their work and studies.

Margaret Bludova had emerged at the head of the Home Craft Course of the Government Youth Training Plan, and Gertie Harelkin, also of Independent parents, was second in the class. In her spare time Margaret read books from the public library and regularly went to hear Dean Arthur Collingwood's Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra. As a member of an educational film club she had seen the newsreel picture "Tsar to Lenin" and heard the voice of the commentator say, "... beside the leader of the Russian revolution stands Vladimir Bonch-Bruivich, friend and confidant of Lenin"—the same Bonch-Bruivich who, with Prince Iilkov and Leo Sulerjitski had aided the old folk in their first years of settlement in Canada.

Mike Kalmikoff, not quite thirty, taught a commercial course

in the Technical Collegiate. Among the top-ranking tennis players in Saskatchewan, he had won the university championship one year.

Johnny Postnikoff, a medical student, said, "When I graduate, I am going to British Columbia to work among my people. It will not be easy, but the young folk here agree that the credulous must be helped by their own people who have broken the shackles. . . ."

Peter Bludoff was unloading boxcars of coal for the Saskatchewan Co-Operative Wholesale Society and studying agriculture at the university. In the spring he returned to the farm at Blaine Lake to help his father sow the crop.

The younger Doctor John Perverseff, who had studied medicine in Vienna and London, was back from serving in the British publicly financed First Ambulance Service in Ethiopia. While he had had a patient on the operating table, an Italian plane had slowly circled to within a few hundred feet above the fifty-two tents, bombing the Red Cross unit and forcing doctors and nurses to drag the wounded out into the open plain.

Laveroff, the artist whose paintings were hanging in the National Gallery of Canada was living in Los Altos, California.

Peter Makaroff was elected alderman on the Saskatoon City Council. When newspapers asked him to comment on the death of Aylmer Maude in England at the age of eighty, Makaroff said: "While other Tolstoyans were bent on painting the Dukhobors to Tolstoy as they thought he wished to see them, Maude continued his objective investigations. He was a morally courageous man with a keen sympathy and admiration for Tolstoy's zeal and genius, but this he tempered with an English practicality. In this, Aylmer Maude did much to make Tolstoy's pacifist and other conclusions valuable to men and women in everyday life."

Since Aylmer Maude had assisted the exodus from Russia in 1898-99, the Dukhobor population in Canada had increased approximately two thousand every ten years. In 1940 there were about 17,000 men, women and children of Dukhobor lineage in Canada, as compared to the original 7,500.

"The sect is disintegrating," Bill Papove, a young engineer with the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company wrote from Alaska to his Dukhobor schoolmates in Saskatchewan. "If we can combine the most admirable characteristics of our Russian ancestors with the best features of Anglo-Saxon civilization in North America, we will then have something worthwhile. . . . I'm sure that those of us who have in some degree learned to rely

on our own reason and intuition—as the earliest Dukhobors intended we should—will never blindly follow any leader, nor will we attempt to exploit the credulous.”

But when such words, at a Sunday meeting, were relayed to the faithful, their addled minds were unreceptive. Petushka had numbed them to a state of hopelessness. For of late they had been unable to please him, to answer anything right. There was, for instance, the occasion when he had sandwiched a particularly lewd story in between two of his homilies from the New Testament. A few weeks later, when he had returned to address the same audience, he had referred to it, had asked an unfortunate man, “Do *you* remember that story?”

“Da, yes, Petushka, I remember,” said the believer.

“Could you now relate that story to me, without making one mistake?”

“Da, dear Petushka.”

Then Verigin upbraided the poor fellow, publicly humiliated him for retaining filth in his mind. “Do you think *I* like such Satan’s stories as you remember? No, I hate them. But sometimes I have to tell such tales to let the brothers and sisters see the horse manure in heads like yours.”

The man hung his head and all felt distressed.

At another meeting, not far distant from the place of the first, Petushka again told a pointless, dirty story. At a subsequent gathering he recalled it, indicated a man who had been present at the previous meeting, asked him, “Do you remember what I said then?”

“Nyet, Petushka, I do not remember,” he said, hopefully.

“So! This is what you do to me! You come to these meetings only to waste my time and forget everything I tell you. In that story was a hidden meaning, some grains of God’s truth were there for you to find. But you even forgot the whole story, you ungrateful sonofabitch. Even a hen knows better than you. In the horse manure she will find the oats, and in scratching for those oats she is getting exercise necessary to all God’s creation. I give you food for your mind but you will not even scratch for it. Oh, I know what you are. You are one of those artists who want me tell you everything so you will have nothing to discover for yourself. You are one million times a Nazi, and you want to make me a dictator worse than Hitler. Bastards like you will ruin everything, even our democracy.”

Increasing pain in Peter’s lungs made his tirades less frequent;

he attended few meetings, called no conventions. His satellites and hangers-on talked among themselves of his declining interest in women. Seldom now had he occasion to sooth a ruffled young girl with, "Come back my dear. You must never fear me. I was only testing you in Christ, and I am so glad to know you are a pure one. I am sorry it is my heavy task to separate the virgins from the whores. But how else could I be sure good girls would keep themselves pure for marriage? Pravda, I am very proud of you. I will always remember you as shining like the sun, a bright light on my journey for God through this dark and evil world."

When Peter's interest in poker waned also, when whisky failed to rouse him from his bed of moaning and cussing, his panderers, vulture-like, looked knowingly at one another. Some accompanied him to Saskatoon where, again in his hospital bed, he excommunicated all the Dukhobors of Blaine Lake district who had failed to subscribe \$3 for membership in his Spiritual Community of Christ. Among the intimates he still received was John Bonderoff, who broadcast health bulletins in the Russian language over CFQC radio station. Too weak to rise from bed, the light of a caged animals in his eyes, his straw-colored mustaches straggling on the white pillow like unravelled ends of Manila rope, he glowered at visitors and nurses alike, refused to have his temperature taken.

He died at ten minutes to two in the morning of February 11, 1939. Blaine Lake Dukhobors, being the nearest to Saskatoon, were first to arrive for the funeral service which began that afternoon in McKague's Funeral Chapel. Saturday night came the Langham people, and by Sunday noon it was necessary to continue the psalm-chanting, speech-making, and corpse-viewing, by turns, as the undertaker's parlor could not hold everyone. There was some real grief amid the sighs of relief as relatives and friends met for the first time since Peter's Day. Elderly Ivan Bludoff, from British Columbia, faithful to the last, said to his unmoved nephew, Peter, "What shall we do now that he is gone?" Though a raw wind swept snow along Saskatoon's streets, McKague's was hot and smelt of embalming fluid. Sunday evening the young folk abandoned it for the Tivoli, where young men and women of the Ukrainian Farmer-Labor Temple Association sang songs of life, land, and love in the deep Ukraine; played on mandolins, violins and balalikas. Shortly before midnight they stood in the mixed crowd on the station platform as

Petushka's coffin was lifted aboard a C.P.R. baggage car for Brilliant, British Columbia.

In Petushka's Brilliant home the faithful filed past his open casket for more than three days and nights; on Sunday it was sealed and lowered into the granite tomb beside the coffin of his father. There followed much speculation concerning who should be the new leader, as Petushka seemingly had indicated no one. His widow, together with his aged mother, Dunia, put forth young Johnny Verigin (Voiken), but Johnny's personality failed to capture the over-taxed imagination of the believers, most of whom felt the mantle of leadership should fall on Verigin's son, who bore the identical name of his father, Peter Petrovich Verigin. None knew the son, nor his whereabouts, though rumor persisted that he was in a Bolshevik jail in Rostov-on-Don.

While inquiries went forth to the U. S. S. R., thousands of men and women assembled on the mountain-side above the Verigin tomb for the traditional six-weeks-after-death graveside ceremony. Doleful psalms floated further up to the fringe of non-Dukhobor spectators, who sat in their automobiles along the Nelson highway. Dukhobors wept, knelt, and touched their foreheads to the rocky, icy ground. Then John Maloff, of Langham, Saskatchewan—the watery-eyed John who had long attended Petushka as aide and courtier—let go the verbal divebomb of the day. John declared that one day toward Petushka's end in the hospital in Saskatoon, "Petushka told me alone, knowing he soon would die, everything we should do when he would be gone from this earth . . . and Petushka told me to keep secret his last advice until this day when his soul will enter Heaven." To a surprised and avid audience John went on to reveal "Petushka's last advice to the people." They should not send delegates to Russia to bring his son as leader in Canada. . . . "When the time is ripe Petushka's son will come to you, or he will call you to him." They should abandon communal life, should live on the land as independent families having nothing to do with the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, Limited, and the directors of that concern must have nothing more to say in the economic destiny of the toiling people. They should, further, choose a few men among them of high standing to guide them; stay in Canada, "as the time has not yet come for migration to another land . . . the future will reveal when you must leave"; send the children to school; pay taxes, "obeying the laws of Canada, rendering unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, but always remembering to obey God's

laws"; cease to have differences and factions; and unite as brothers and sisters in the Spiritual Community of Christ.

This unexpected revelation by John Maloff precipitated doubt, discussion, angry words, and some conviction. It resulted, as the days went by, in groupings around no less than four diverse opinions. One group believed Verigin had actually given Maloff "his last advice, and so this advice we must follow." Another faction reached the conclusion that Verigin had told Maloff nothing, that Maloff made up the story himself. Others held to an involved interpretation that Petushka had told Maloff exactly what Maloff had related, "but Petushka means us to do the opposite of what he said. . . . Petushka had to choose this way to let us know what not to do, because he knew it would be necessary to fool the Government spies who would be listening at our meeting . . . so it is very plain to us that we must send delegates to Russia to bring his son as our new leader . . . we must not send our children to school, must not pay taxes, or obey man-made laws of any kind. . . . Slava Bohu."

Skeptics, tired of communal wranglings and divine leadership, thought Verigin might not have told Maloff anything of consequence, but felt the advice worth following, minus its esoteric interpretations, "even if John Maloff himself made it up."

The investment companies holding mortgages on the lands and properties of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, Limited, in British Columbia, hoped the Dukhobors would directly accept the advice, at least to the extent of becoming independent one-family farmers. The two corporations mainly interested, the Sun Life Assurance Company, and National Trust Company, took legal action against the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, with a view to re-letting land to those who would agree to farm it independently, like other farmers in Canada. The Sun Life won in the courts, foreclosed, obtained orders for eviction; but in the early summer of 1939 the British Columbia government, fearing some unpleasantness might rise to the surface during the Royal Visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, made certain that eviction proceedings be postponed. Even after their Majesties returned to England, the government still remained loath to allow the law to take its course. Loan corporations were not in public favor; well-intentioned champions of toiling farmers, God, and interest-free money had petitioned officials who, besides, feared large-scale outbreaks of nudism and incendiarism. Not until after the assurance company

—stymied by political maneuvering and soft-toned letters from the Attorney General's department—sued Sheriff M. E. Harper, of Nelson, for failure to proceed with evictions did the government of British Columbia move. It then lifted the financial burden from the Sun Life Assurance Company and placed it quietly on the shoulders of the provincial taxpayers. The government now, as owner of the mortgaged lands, worked out a scheme to help the ex-Community Dukhobors become independent farmers.

Further confusing the issue amongst the lingering faithful, a series of "wills" in Verigin's handwriting came to light; they were all unsigned. It was dawning on many that Peter Petrovich Verigin's mission on earth was truly "Chestiakov—the purger." Had he not said, "I am Chestiakov who will purge you and mix you all up so even the Devil himself could not lead you?" And some aged folk recalled Lukeria had prophesied, "After I am dead there will be only two leaders, and then you will forever decide for yourselves what to do." The Saskatchewan Dukhobors—about half the 17,000 in Canada—opposed almost unanimously another Petushka. "Since the death of the last Petushka the sect here has broken up, and I think that a very good thing. . . ." wrote an Independent.

Then Canada entered the Second World War, which had flared beyond the boundaries of Ethiopia, China, Spain, and Czechoslovakia into Poland. Hitler's immediate drive was obviously toward Chamberlain's England instead of Stalin's Russia. Dukhobor differences submerged in antipathy to war, and the threat of military conscription. Peter G. Makaroff, K. C., resigned from the vice-presidency of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, because of his pacifist principles. Peter Bludoff left the machine shop in Saskatoon for the farm of his father and mother. Christ's saying, "turn the other cheek," was taken in earnest by ex-Alderman Makaroff who did not strike back when Alderman Walter Caswell slapped his face because Makaroff asked difficult questions about causes leading up to the war, and war as a solution to the differences of men and nations. The Named Dukhobors and the Society of Independent Dukhobors came together in one association against killing, against war, no matter who started it or when or how . . . "war will cease only when all men and women turn from violence . . . refuse to fight, no matter what provocation. . . . Christ said turn the other cheek. Some among humanity must begin, must set an example. Our ancestors did not give way to the Cossacks. We will lead the way, will suffer for our principles—come what may."

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